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French's Acting Edition. No. 1971.

CARNIVAL

A Play in Three Acts

ADAPTED BY

H. C. M. HARDINGE

AND

MATHESON LANG

FROM THE ITALIAN PLAY "SIROCCO"

BY

PORDES MILO

PR
6015
A56
C3
1927

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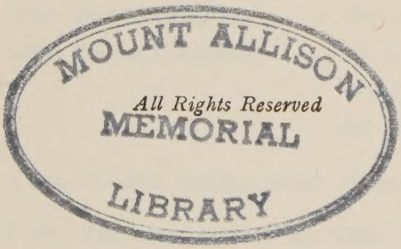

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Made and Printed in Great Britain by Butler & Tanner Ltd., Frome and London

CARNIVAL

The New Theatre, London, February 5th, 1920.

GIUSEPPE (servant to the STENOS) . . .	*Mr. Horton Cooper.*
LELIO (SIMONETTA'S brother) . . .	*Mr. Antony Holles.*
NINO (the son of SILVIO and SIMONETTA, aged 5)	*Miss Ivy Pike.*
CAMILLA (servant to the STENOS) . . .	*Miss Dorothy Fane.*
TOMMASO (of the Alfieri Theatre Company) .	*Mr. Edward Y. Rae.*
CLELIA (of the Alfieri Theatre Company) .	*Miss Jane Rouira.*
THE PORTER	*Mr. Donald R. Young.*
ANDREA, COUNT SCIPIONE	*Mr. Dennis Neilson-Terry.*
SILVIO STENO (Director of the Alfieri Theatre)	*Mr. Matheson Lang.*
OTTAVIA, BARONESS DELLA TORRE (ETTORE'S wife and SILVIO'S sister)	*Miss Margaret Damer.*
SIMONETTA (SILVIO'S wife)	*Miss Hilda Bayley.*
ETTORE, BARON DELLA TORRE . . .	*Mr. H. R. Hignett.*
NELLA (of the Alfieri Theatre Company) .	*Miss Winifred Izard.*
COLIA (of the Alfieri Theatre Company) . .	*Miss Betty Belloc.*
DIONIGI (of the Alfieri Theatre Company) .	*Mr. Geo. Skillan.*
GRAZZO (Stage Manager)	*Mr. Alfred Brandon.*
SANDRO (of the Alfieri Theatre Company) .	*Mr. Walter Menpes.*
CECCO (of the Alfieri Theatre Company) . .	*Mr. Harold Bradly.*
LUCIO (of the Alfieri Theatre Company) . .	*Mr. Geo. Morgan.*
THE CALL BOY	*Mr. Freddie Piesley.*
A DOCTOR	*Mr. Ernest Bodkin.*

ACTS I AND II.—The Venetian Palace of SILVIO STENO.

ACT III.—The Green Room of the Alfieri Theatre.

A 58341

CARNIVAL

PROLOGUE

The Prologue to "Pagliacci" is sung at the commencement, arranged as follows :—

1. Overture, during which houselights are checked in three sections. Complete *Black Out* in front at end of Overture.
2. "Pagliacci" music starts.
   Act Drop rises on green Tableaux Curtains.
   White Spot arc from front of house on singer as he comes through Tableaux Curtains.
   White Spot arc *out* as singer exits through curtains at end of Prologue.
3. Take Tableaux Curtains up and put first Act lighting on simultaneously.

NOTE.—All lights behind Tableaux Curtains to be *out* when singer comes through curtains.

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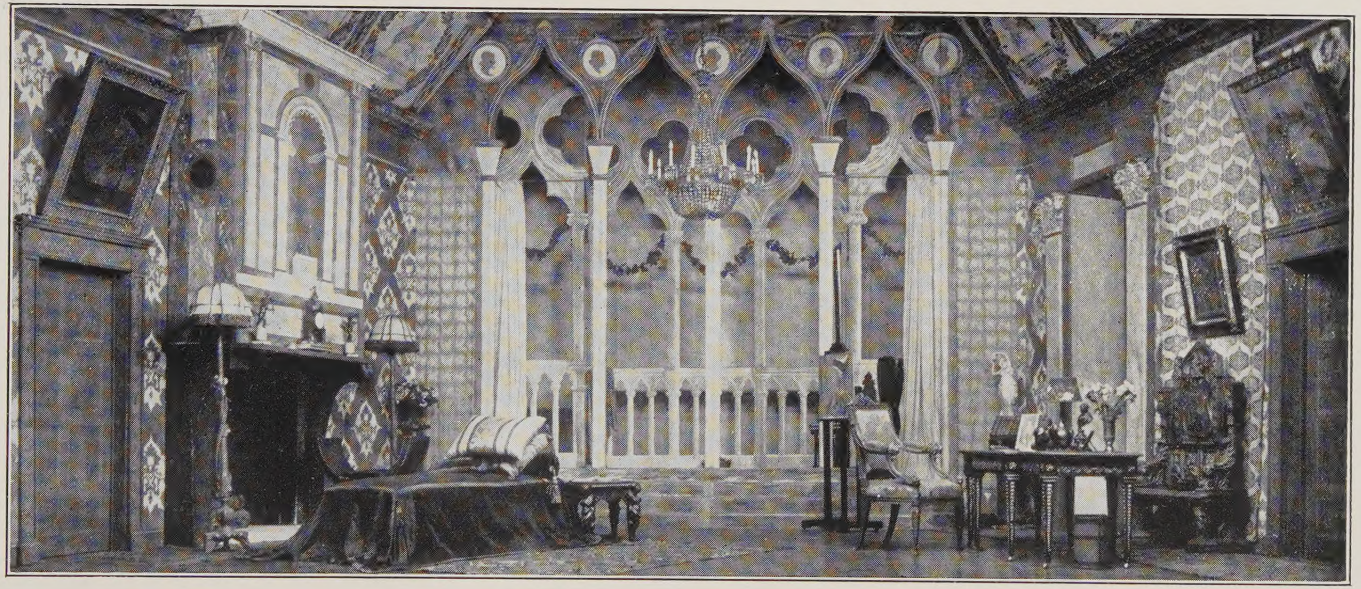

To face page 5.

CARNIVAL

ACT I

SCENE.—*A large and stately room in a Venetian Palace. Early Renaissance, but, like its contents, somewhat faded.* L. *door to staircase, another further down to a study. At the back four high bay windows with balconies overlook the Grand Canal. The walls are covered with old pressed leather. There are portraits of Italian poets—"Aristo," Petrarch, Tasso, and portraits of actors and actresses. A fine Venetian crystal hangs from a magnificent painted ceiling, arm-chairs, etc., with gilt backs, Venetian glasses. Everywhere flowers, bric-à-brac, an easel* R., *on it a portrait of a Doge. On the* R. *a wood-fire burns in a magnificent fireplace, below which is a door leading to another room.*

(GIUSEPPE, *old confidential family retainer, is discovered behind table* L.)

(LELIO R. *He is a dissipated, unwholesome-looking youth of about* 20, *with a certain amount of good looks which, however, are rapidly disappearing; he has a sort of perverted sense of humour and an impudent, self-assured manner.*)

LELIO (*in front of fireplace*). When do you expect your mistress back, Giuseppe?

GIUSEPPE. I can't say, Signore. The Signora Steno has gone shopping.

LELIO (*lighting cigarette*). Shopping! Oh Lor'! I must see her though. Hang it! Oh! I suppose—*you* couldn't—Giuseppe——?

GIUSEPPE (*turning round sharply*). I never lend money!

LELIO. Did I say I wanted to borrow? What a chap you are! (*Laughing a little nervously and trying to turn conversation—flinging himself on divan.*) Where's my excellent brother-in-law? Out, too?

GIUSEPPE (L. *of table* R.). Of course, he is—at rehearsal.

LELIO. At rehearsal? (*Throws cushion on floor* R. *of divan.*)

GIUSEPPE. We give "Otello" to-morrow. It's only a rehearsal for some small parts he's changing, but you know how seriously the Chief takes his duties. Ours is not the greatest theatre in Italy for nothing. (*Crosses* C.)

Lelio. Oh, he's a wonderful fellow!—Signor Silvio Steno! A wonderful fellow—Devil take him! (*Rising.*) Well! I must be off. I'll look in later. Ta-ta. (*Going towards door* L.U.E.)

(Giuseppe *crosses behind divan to fireplace.*)

Nino (*off stage*). I will go in. I want to see if father's back. I will, I will.

Camilla (*off stage*). Nino, you naughty boy. You're not to go in. Come back at once.

(Nino *is a pretty boy of* 5. *His nurse,* Camilla, *a pretty girl of* 18, *follows. The two are disputing as they enter.*)

Lelio (*meeting* Nino C.). Hullo, Jackanapes!

Nino (*smiling up a little impudently*). Hullo, Lelio!

Lelio. *Uncle* Lelio, *if* you please! (*Picking* Nino *up.*)

Nino (*struggling to get free*). Let me go! Let me go!

Lelio. Uncle Lelio!

Nino. I want to go out on the balcony.

(Giuseppe *replaces cushion and remains at fireplace.*)

Lelio. Say it, you little devil—Uncle Lelio!

Nino. Oh, *Uncle* Lelio, *then*!

Lelio. That's better, you obstinate little mule! Off with you.

(Nino, *let loose, runs to balcony to look out.*)

Lelio (*close to* Camilla *on his way to door, pinches her ear familiarly*). Well, 'Milla? To-night at the Café Florian, eleven o'clock, eh?

Camilla. Perhaps! (*Tossing her head coquettishly.*)

Lelio. Little goose! At eleven o'clock! (*Getting to door, turning to* Giuseppe.) Ta-ta, old watch-dog.

(*Exit* Lelio L.U.E.)

Giuseppe (*looking after* Lelio, *scowling*). Insolent young puppy! I wonder the Director allows him inside the house, always cadging! (*Dropping down* R.)

Camilla (C., *rapturously*). But his eyes! Ah! Madonna mia! His beautiful black eyes.

Giuseppe. The evil eye! You take care of yourself, my girl. (*Comes down below settee.*)

Camilla. Pfui! I hope I can look after myself. If the Signora can enjoy *her*self—why shouldn't I?

Giuseppe (*turning on* Camilla *sharply*). Eh? What's that? (*Facing her.*)

Camilla. Oh! Of course! You think her a saint! As if all the world didn't know what brings the Count Scipione here. (*Picks up toys that are near foot of divan. Gets* C. *again.*)

Giuseppe (*crosses to* r.c.). Now, now, now! None of that! I've been with the Signori many years. I was with them in their bad days. There's no more loving husband—no more loving wife.

Camilla. Then don't insult me about the Signor Lelio! I'm as good as the Signora, I hope! But I've got eyes!

(Nino *has been by the window and has now opened it and is going out on to the balcony.*)

(*Water effect starts.*)*

Nino. There he is! There he is!

Camilla (*running to* Nino, *scolding*). Come away from that balcony. You little pig of a monkey, you! You know very well you mustn't do that. (*She pulls him to edge of steps.*)

Nino. But the sun's shining, 'Milla. I shan't catch cold. And I want to see if father's coming. I will go out! I will! I will! I will! (*Breaking away from* Camilla.)

Cry (*off* l.). Sty-ee!

(Camilla *shrugs her shoulders and lets* Nino *go out.*)

Nino. See! There's a gondola! Hi! Hi! Oh!—A fat old gentleman!!! That's not father. (*Coming from window. He comes to divan and climbs up on it.*)

(*Water effect stops.*)

Camilla. And when he does come, don't you tell him I let you go out on the balcony.

Nino. I shall. (*Shaking cushions.*)

Camilla. And get me scolded, you disobedient, ungrateful——

Nino. No! No, 'Milla, I won't tell. (*Throwing his arms round* Camilla's *neck.*)

(*A knock at door* l.)

Giuseppe (l. *of table* r.). Come in.

(*Enter* Tommaso *and* Clelia. Tommaso *is a typical specimen of old-fashioned actor. Ponderous and mouthy, and full of self-importance. He hails* Giuseppe *from the doorway.*)

Tommaso. Ah! Dear Signore! A fine day! A remarkably fine day!

How jocund through the pearly skies
The chariot steeds of Phœbus rise.

(Nino *laughs and claps his hands.*)

Camilla. What's that? Shakespeare? (*Behind divan holding* Nino.)

Tommaso. No, no!—A little effort of my own. From my

* The water effects can be made with lantern and slides on a linen cloth.

tragedy, "The Christians and the Lions." (*He puts hat down on chair by easel and comes* C.)

(Nino *gets off divan.*)

Can I have speech with the Chief?

(Nino *walks slowly round behind* Tommaso.)

Giuseppe. I'm afraid not! He's at rehearsal. You ought to know that.

Clelia. Rehearsal—of what—"Otello?"

Giuseppe. Of course. (*Crosses to* R.)

Tommaso. H'm! Very unfortunate! Very unfortunate indeed! And Madame?

(Nino *who is now on his* L., *imitates his gesture.*)

Giuseppe. Out shopping. (*Picking up newspaper and reading it.*)

Tommaso. Ha! H'm! Very unfortunate also. H'm!

(Nino *imitates and says:*)

Nino. H'm! (*Is then taken to balcony by* Camilla.)

Giuseppe. What do you want with them?

Tommaso. Oh, the merest trifle! I left home this morning somewhat hastily and happen to have left my purse—just a little advance—— (Clelia *comes below table* L.)

Giuseppe. You've had two months' salary in advance already.

Tommaso. My dear old boy!

Giuseppe (*going on unheeding*). It's no good coming here. You won't get a soldo. You know that perfectly well.

Tommaso. And this is friendship. Friendship! (*Turning away.*)

Giuseppe. Considering the Director's kindness, I wonder you have the face to come at all. (*Sits by fireplace.*)

Tommaso. Oh! Ingratitude! How much more sharp than a serpent's tooth!

Clelia (L.C.). There's no help for it, Tommaso. You must pawn your watch.

Tommaso. The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune! *I*, whose Fillipo, whose Oreste has thrilled the sea-girt towns of Italy? Besides, it's been pledged a fortnight!

(*Enter the* Porter L.U.E. *He brings a letter and programme.*)

Porter. Giuseppe! A letter for the Signore, and a proof programme of "Otello"! (*At top of table* L.)

Tommaso. Aha! Let me see! (*Taking programme.*)

(Porter *puts down salver with letter and exits* L.U.E.)

Tommaso. Otello—Signor Silvio Steno. Desdemona—Signora Simonetta Steno. Yes! Yes! But where am I? Ah! Signor Tommaso!—A senator—a senator! I whose Oreste—whose——

CLELIA. Am I not in the bill? (*Snatches programme.*)

TOMMASO (*taking programme back*). No, lovey! Oh yes, here. In Act II—peasants, revellers, etc.

CLELIA. Walking on!—practically supering! It's a wicked shame—after engaging us "by special arrangement" for his Shakespearean season—— (*Gets* L.)

(TOMMASO *puts programme back on salver.*)

GIUSEPPE (*rising*). Well, of all the ingratitude! When you know very well he took you on out of pure charity—simply because you had been with him in his early days——

CLELIA. H'm! He hadn't such high and mighty ideas then.

GIUSEPPE. You ought to be ashamed of yourself—after all his kindness to you both—why you were starving!——

CLELIA. Starving! When I could have toured as——

(*Enter the* PORTER.)

PORTER (*announcing*). The Count Andrea Scipione.

CLELIA (*turning gushingly*). Ah! the dear Count!

(*Enter* ANDREA L. *Smart, well-groomed and handsome. Coming* C., *he greets the actors, who stand* L., *courteously, but is amused at their eccentricities.*)

(NINO *from balcony runs to* L. *of* ANDREA *at once.*)

NINO (*crying*). Uncle Andrea! Uncle Andrea!

ANDREA (*nodding to* CLELIA). How do you do, Signora? (*Stooping affectionately to* NINO.) Well, Nanni! Papa out, I hear?

GIUSEPPE (*moving down* R.). He'll be in soon, Signor Conte. Won't you sit down?

ANDREA. Well, Signor Tommaso? How are you?

TOMMASO (L. *of* ANDREA). Well! well, I thank you—but very busy!—the rush of rehearsals, you know. You are coming to our "Otello"? My wife and I are playing.

ANDREA. Yes, yes, I shall be there—and what part are you playing?

CLELIA (*to change the subject hurries* TOMMASO *up to door* L.U.E.). Tommaso!—Tommaso! We shall be late for rehearsal! So sorry Count, but we *must* go! So much to do! Good-bye—for the present!

ANDREA. Good-bye. (*Sits on divan, puts* NINO *on his knee.*)

CLELIA. Come, Tommaso!

(*Exit up* L.U.E.)

TOMMASO (*at door, lingers and turns back*). I'm coming, lovey, I'm coming. I—I suppose, Signore, you could not——

GIUSEPPE (*down* R.). Signor Tommaso, you know the Director will be very angry——

Tommaso. Angry ?—at what ?

Giuseppe (*with meaning*). If you are *late for rehearsal.*

Tommaso. Ah, true ! True ! (*Sadly, as he goes.*) Ah, well, no matter ! No matter ! I whose Fillipo, whose Oreste——

(*Exit* L.U.E. *talking.*)

(Andrea *laughs;* Nino *laughs with him.*)

Andrea. Poor old Tommaso !

Giuseppe. An ungrateful pair of vagabonds imposing on the Director's soft heart. (*Moves to balcony.*)

Camilla (C.). That's what comes of playing this Shakespeare—it seems to collect all the long-haired buffoons in the country round the theatre.

(*Sound of gondola heard.*)

Andrea. Well, bambino, and what do you think of the Carnival ?

Nino. I haven't seen it. Papa won't let me go.

Camilla. He's not very well, Signore. Indeed, he should be in bed now. You must go to your room, Nanni. The doctor ordered it——

Andrea. Never mind the doctor's orders now, Camilla, you'll have to watch the Carnival from the window then, Nino.

(Camilla *goes out on to balcony.*)

Nino. Tell me about the procession to-night, Uncle Andrea.

Andrea. Well, first of all—comes Pantalone—the Spirit of Carnival. Then Brighella in wide white trousers. Then——

(*Cry of* " Sty-ee ! ! " *off* L. *and water effect of a gondola drawing near.*)

Camilla (*leaning over balcony*). The Signor Steno !

Nino. Father ! (*Climbing down off* Andrea's *knee, runs to* Camilla.)

Camilla (*leaving window*). Yes ! Yes ! Your father. You must run along at once, Nanni. If he finds you up he'll be angry.

(*Door slams off* L.)

Andrea. Too late, 'Milla. Here he is. (*Rises and goes round divan to fireplace.*)

(*Enter* Silvio L. *Tall and good-looking, his manner is easy and very simple and natural. He is an open character, trustful and ready to think the best of people. As he comes in his boy runs to him quickly and is caught up in his arms before he sees* Andrea.)

Nino. Father !

Silvio (*up* L.—*puts doll boxes on table, and picks* Nino *up in his arms*). Nanni ! Out of your bed ! You little joker—I thought the doctor said——

ANDREA (*back to fireplace*). It's my fault, Silvio!

SILVIO (*half-laughing*). What, Andrea! (*Crosses to divan carrying* NINO.) You! How splendid! You'll stay with us, of course? (*Puts* NINO *on divan, shakes hands with* ANDREA.)

ANDREA. Can't possibly. I'm only in Venice for the day. Nino's been entertaining me.

SILVIO. How do you think he's looking? Splendid, eh? And more and more like his mother, aren't you, my heart's delight? My bonny one! Now guess what I've bought you! (*Crosses to table* L. *and gets boxes of dolls.*)

NINO (*standing on divan*). Something for me! Oh, do tell me! I'll never guess.

(CAMILLA *and* GIUSEPPE *watch interested up* C.)

SILVIO. Oh, but you must! Much the best part of a present is guessing what it is. (*Crossing back to divan with boxes.*)

NINO. Oh, father, please—— (*Kneeling on divan.*)

SILVIO (*laughing*). There! Now you open that one. (*Giving* NINO *the parcel and helping to unpack them.*) Brighella, the clever one, and Harlequin (*taking it out of the box* NINO *has opened*) the Jester. My carnival present.

NINO (*taking dolls*). Oh, how lovely! Oh! Thank you, father —thank you—tremendously! (*Hugs his father, who bends down eagerly for his embrace. Sitting on divan.*)

SILVIO. Now run to your bed and have a tremendous sleep. (*Lifting him off divan.*) Run along!

(NINO *hesitates.*)

Oh, very well, say good-bye to Uncle Andrea.

NINO (*crossing to* ANDREA, *front of divan*). Good-bye, Uncle Andrea.

(ANDREA *pats* NINO *on the head.*)

ANDREA. Good-bye, old man.

SILVIO. Now—scoot! Fly!! (NINO *moves up* C. *slightly.*)

NINO (*turning*). I don't want to go to bed.

SILVIO (*rising*). But you must go to bed.

NINO. I want to stay and play with Harlequin!

SILVIO (*driving him off with* CAMILLA). Well, you can take Harlequin to bed with you. Shoo!! Fly!!

(CAMILLA *at the door* L.U.E. NINO *is laughingly bundled out by his father.* CAMILLA *follows.*)

(*By door* L.U.E.) What a great man it is! Ah, you should marry, Andrea—all life for me centres in that child—and his mother. (*Crosses back to divan, and extending his hand to* ANDREA *over divan.*) Well! It's good to see you again, old man. Cigarette? (*Offering case.*)

Andrea. Thanks! (*Takes one.*)

Giuseppe (*by table* L.; *holds up letter and programme to* Silvio.) A letter and a proof of the programme for "Otello," Signore.

Silvio. Oh! All right! All right! I've had quite enough of "Otello" for one day! (*Crosses to table* L. *Putting down programme, looking at letter.*)

(*Exit* Giuseppe L.U.E.)

(Andrea *lights cigarette—matches on mantelshelf.*)

H'm! The Milan postmark. Excuse me, will you? (*Opens letter.*) I thought so. My old manager—Donati. Poor old chap.

Andrea. No bad news?

Silvio. He's been ill some time and grows weaker every day. It's hard luck! Poor old Donati! He taught me everything I know. Any success I have achieved I owe entirely to him. (*Puts letter back in envelope.*) But what's this about your not staying? You know you promised to go (*throws letter on table*) with us to the Carnival to-night. Simonetta will be dreadfully disappointed, and you know, when the dear child's disappointed!—— (*Shrugs his shoulders expressively. Lights cigarette.*)

Andrea. We must make it up to her some other way. But why do you play "Otello"? One doesn't want tragedy at Carnival time! And you've often said it's not a part you care for.

Silvio. It isn't. You're quite right. (*Takes up boxes and brown paper from divan and moves to table* L.)

Andrea. Then, why "Otello"?

Silvio. Why indeed!—don't ask me. They want it——

(Andrea *stretches himself on divan.*)

—that's all. We're sold out for every performance. (*He puts boxes in wastepaper basket under table* L.) I produced it a month or two ago for a short run. Simonetta particularly wanted to play Desdemona. (*Comes to* C.) I think it was that decided me—rather against my will—but you know what she is when she's set her heart on a thing—and she was quite right—quite right—her judgment is excellent. She was wonderful in the part. And she's so popular—they love her. She made a splendid success.

Andrea (*smiling*). And Otello?

Silvio. I? Oh yes, I too!—very much to my own surprise, I was really quite good—but I don't like the part—he—how can I put it? (*Moves to table* L., *and sits in chair* R. *of it.*) He disturbs me—almost frightens me—I get so worked up—I feel it so acutely that it exhausts me utterly, and that's foolish, you know—one ought not to let an emotional part get such a grip on one—especially as I don't sympathize in the slightest degree with the character

Andrea. Now why?

Silvio. Oh, his psychology is all wrong——

(Andrea *laughs and* Silvio *too.*)

—a dreadful thing to say of the great English poet Shakespeare, eh? But really his jealousy is preposterous—don't you think so?

Andrea. My dear fellow! I'm not married! You are. (*Pause.*) Suppose—of course, it's quite impossible, but suppose you found *yourself* in Otello's shoes! What would you do? (*Watching* Silvio *narrowly.*)

Silvio (*heedlessly smoking*). Oh, I don't know—separate! The wife ceases to love. Indeed, loves someone else. Well, it's not her fault! One can't force love. And to rob a woman of life—just out of wounded vanity and because a greedy sense of ownership has been outraged—— (*Rising, and going* c.) No, believe me, my dear fellow, Otello was an unpleasant barbarian who murdered his wife in a fit of indigestion. (*Moving up to easel* l.c.)

Andrea. Indigestion!

Silvio. Probably. He was a Moor, remember, and unused to civilized cookery. (*Selects a brush from palette on stool and touches up picture on easel.*)

Andrea. Well—I'd never have thought you so cold-blooded. (*Raises himself on divan.*)

Silvio. You think that cold-blooded, do you?

Andrea. Yes! I *couldn't* forgive the man who came between me and the woman I loved. I might hide it, but I'd hate him—to the death.

Silvio. Why! My dear Andrea! You almost speak as if there were such a man!

(Andrea *rises, stands down* r.)

Come! Come! You know very well if one loves a woman, one only desires her happiness! But just now when everyone's susceptible!—taken out of themselves, surely that is the very time when our great past should make its appeal.

Andrea. Oh, you and the past! You live so much in the past, you know nothing of the present.

Silvio (*painting picture*). Oh yes, I do! But think! Otello, Moor of Venice; Venice past and Venice present. Look at the men—of yesterday and to-day—giants and pigmies! Think of this fellow (*pointing to portrait on easel*), Michele Steno, adding Verona, Padua, Bellono and Vincenza to the republic.

(Andrea *moves up to fireplace.*)

Andrea. And his descendant is Director of the Alfieri Theatre.

Silvio. Now you're laughing at me. (*Throws brush on stool—drops down* L.C.)

Andrea. Not a bit. They were men of (*coming round above divan to* R.C. *up stage*) their time. You're a man of yours. (*Moves up stage.*) Now I must be off. (*Looks at watch, moves to* L.)

(Silvio *turns to expostulate.*)

Silvio. No, no. (*Moves to* Andrea's *right.*)

Andrea. Yes, really! I have to call at the Arsenal before returning to Verona.

Silvio. Stay and see Simonetta.

Andrea (L.C. *up stage*). I'll come back, if I can. But I must be off now. So, good-bye, you great big simple—schoolboy.

Silvio (C. *up stage*). Oh, well, if it wasn't for a streak of simplicity here and there, the world would die of its own cleverness.

(*As* Silvio *and* Andrea *laugh and shake hands, the* Porter *announces the* Baroness Della Torre *from* L.U.E. *The* Baroness *enters at once. She is rather tall and slight, distinctly well-bred and, though quietly, very well-dressed. She enters quickly, ready to greet her brother warmly.*)

Ottavia (*just in doorway*). My dear Silvio. (*Seeing* Andrea *and immediately growing perceptibly colder.*) Oh! How do you do?

Andrea. How do you do, Baroness. The baron's quite well, I hope?

Ottavia. Quite well, thank you. Have you been back long from Verona?

Andrea. I am only over for the day. I have to return to-night.

Ottavia (*surprised*). Indeed! Then you won't be at the Carnival?

Andrea. I'm afraid not!

(Ottavia *crosses to* R. *down stage.*)

Remember me to the Baron. Good-bye, Silvio. (*At door.*)

Silvio. Try and drop in later.

(*Exits with* Andrea *for a moment and immediately re-enters, comes down to* Ottavia, *and kisses her on both cheeks.*)

Ottavia. How can you have that man so much about the place, Silvio?

Silvio. My dear Ottavia, you know he's my greatest friend. Why, I owe him everything. (*Holding both her hands.*)

Ottavia. I know he financed you years ago, when things were bad. Well, what of that! He's got it all back—with interest.

Silvio. Yes! His money (*releases her hands*), but the faith, the trust in an absolutely unknown actor, who'd only been a failure. You don't know what that means—I do—I'm a manager. (*Moves to* L.C.)

Ottavia. Failure, nonsense!

Silvio. Oh, I'd made one or two—(*puts cigarette on ash-tray on table* L.)—spasmodic successes, but when Andrea——

(Ottavia *sits on divan.*)

—first met me I tell you I hadn't a soldo in the world. (*He sits on end of table* L.)

Ottavia. He wasn't so very philanthropic. He knew you'd succeed.

Silvio. You're incorrigible, Ottavia! I wish you'd try to like him.

Ottavia. I'm afraid I downright *dis*like him—*and* his reputation.

Silvio. A soldier's reputation is at every gossip's mercy.

Ottavia (*looking at* Silvio *affectionately*). What a great big child you are, Silvio, you believe in everyone. Even a notorious Don Juan like that.

Silvio. Don Juan! Nonsense! (*Sits in chair* R. *of table* L.C.) If you really thought him a Don Juan you'd adore him.

(*Hums as he writes—correcting the proof programme during this scene.*)

(*A pause.* Ottavia *removes her gloves.*)

Ottavia. H'm! Where's Simonetta?

Silvio. Oh, she's out shopping, I think.

(*Slight pause.*)

Ottavia. Silvio, I want to say something—and you mustn't mind.

(Silvio *is humming through this and punctuating the melody with his lines.*)

Silvio. What is it?

Ottavia. Well! It's about—Count Andrea!

Silvio. Oh! (*Smiling.*) Andrea again!!!

Ottavia. Yes, Andrea again. It's not fair to Simonetta—to have him so much about.

Silvio. To Simonetta! Why, what do you mean?

Ottavia. Only that every one in Venice wonders you can allow him to be so familiar with your wife.

Silvio. Familiar!—with Simonetta! my dear Ottavia!

Ottavia. Oh, it's not my opinion only—(*rises, moves towards* Silvio)—it's of others I am speaking. Remember you are a public man—people are talking of it.

(Silvio *turns in his chair and looks at her.*)

Silvio. People are talking—of my wife—really, Ottavia!

Ottavia. I really don't see why you should be so surprised.

Simonetta's very young, very attractive—and a little frivolous. (*Gets nearer* Silvio.)

Silvio. You can tell—people—from me—one of Andrea's closest friends—that—he's just the best chap in the world—I don't believe these stories about him! Why! Shouldn't I have known? Wouldn't I have seen? But he's never shown a sign of this—this character you'd fasten on him! Don Juan! indeed. Don Juan! be damned.

(*Turns to his writing.*)

Ottavia (*turns down* c. *slightly*). Quite possibly! He's a very clever fellow.

Silvio. And my dearest friend.

Ottavia. Friendship is no guarantee for faithfulness where a woman's concerned.

Silvio. What do you mean, Ottavia? (*Turns to her.*) Speak plainly—you're saying either too much or too little.

Ottavia. Oh, I don't mean anything in particular! I only warn you for your good.

Silvio. H'm! I wonder if Cain warned Abel for his good before he killed him! (*Turns back to work.*)

Ottavia (c.). Remember, she's very young, very spoilt, and—well, shall we say a little childish? What wonder if some man—I don't say Andrea—but some man should——

Silvio (*rises, goes to* Ottavia c., *silences her with a gesture*). Don't! Please don't! You've hinted at this sort of thing before with others. Now it's Andrea. (*Patting her on arms.*) I know you speak out of kindness. You're my sister. But I wish you wouldn't! (*Crosses in front of* Ottavia *below divan round to fireplace.*) It only leaves an unpleasant taste in the mouth.

(*Sound of* Simonetta's *gondola arriving.*)

(*Water effect.*)

Ottavia (c.). I'm sorry, Silvio! (*Pause.*) I'm not an idle mischief-maker, but I'm sure you don't want her name coupled with anyone—— (*Moves nearer to divan.*)

(Silvio *suddenly looks at* Ottavia, *stern, menacing.*)

(r.c. *by divan, laughing a little nervously.*) Oh, my good man, it's no use glaring at me—— (*Moving away* l.c. *and trying to turn the talk.*) Tsha! I hate scandal, I came to do the theatre accounts.

Silvio (*in a monotone, hardly hearing*). The accounts! The accounts? They've not all come in yet. Those that have are in my study.

Ottavia. Very well, I'll do those. (*Crossing to down* l.) It's a good thing there's some one in the family understands them!

(*Gondola stops. Water effect stops.*)

(*Exit* Ottavia *into* Silvio's *room, first* L.)

(Silvio *sits in a strained attitude on end of divan, looking at programme. A pause.*)

(*A girl's head comes round door* L.U.E. *She is quite young, very pretty, graceful and dainty. She sees* Silvio *is deeply occupied, and crossing at back to* R.C. *places sweet-box on stool at head of divan, and, dancing up behind him, puts her hands over his eyes. She is very childish, very undisciplined, a graceful, pretty and very charming butterfly.*)

Simonetta. Tra! La! (*Hands over* Silvio's *eyes.*)

Silvio (*suddenly realizing* Simonetta's *presence, turns, seizing her hands full of suppressed emotion*). Simonetta!

Simonetta. Why, Silvio? (*Sitting on his knee.*)

Silvio (*recovering himself and looking at* Simonetta). You dear, dear child!

Simonetta. Oh, "child"! (*Movement of impatience.*)

Silvio. I didn't know—I didn't realize——

Simonetta. You funny old thing. What's the matter? What didn't you realize?

(Silvio *puts his arm round her.*)

Silvio. What you are! What you mean to me!

Simonetta. Have you only found it out after all these years?

Silvio. Every day I am finding it out.

Simonetta (*looks at him a little strangely*). I wonder, Silvio—I often wonder. (*Rises and moves* C.)

Silvio (*jumps up to embrace her*). Simonetta!

Simonetta (*laughing lightly as she runs away*). No! No! If you want me you must catch me! (*She runs up* C. *to easel. In running behind easel she upsets the portrait of Michele Steno on easel up stage* L.C.) Oh, bother the old thing!

Silvio (*picking it up*). I don't suppose it's the first time a pretty woman bowled you over—(*putting painting back*)—eh, most famous of all the Stenos?

Simonetta (*moving to* Silvio—*charming and petting him*). No! No! That's you, Silvio!

Silvio (*pleased*). Ho! flatterer! (*Kisses her—puts his arm round her.*) By the way, Andrea called to-day. (*Moving down* C. *together.*)

Simonetta (*with quite a change, serious*). Oh! did he? Is he coming back?

Silvio (*moving round to fireplace below divan*). I don't think he will. (*Puts piece of string he has picked up off divan on mantelshelf. String from doll boxes.*)

Simonetta (*then quite lightly again*). But, of course he will! By the way, Silvio! I bought this hat.

Silvio (*with a pretence of being shocked*). Phew! (*Coming down to below divan.*)

(Simonetta *laughs gaily.*)

It looks terribly expensive.

Simonetta. You goose! It was awfully cheap! Guess how much?

Silvio (*moving nearer* Simonetta). I should insult it! 200 lire!

Simonetta. Oh, you funny old thing! Just half that!

Silvio. Half!

Simonetta. H'm! Here's the bill.

(Silvio *holds out his hand for the bill.*)

No. I want the money, please, to pay at once!

(Silvio *takes out note-case and takes out some notes.*)

So (*imitating* Tommaso's *manner*)—an advance if you please, Signor il Directore—— (*Hands bill open to him.*)

Silvio (*looking at bill*). Robiato? But this is *for* 200 lire.

Simonetta. I wanted to break it to you gradually!

Silvio. Simonetta! (*Gives her back the bill and goes slightly* r.)

Simonetta. Now, Mr. Cross Old Bear——! (*Pouting.*) Are you going to scold me, after all your pretty speeches?

Silvio. No! No! Scold you indeed! Of course not. Do I ever scold you? (*Giving notes and putting one arm round* Simonetta.) And my receipt?

Simonetta (*eluding the arm, taking the notes and slipping away as if afraid he'll crush the hat*). Tshtsh! My hat!! And the sun! Do draw the curtain. (*She puts notes in handbag.*)

(Silvio *goes up to curtain on* l. *of window at back and pulls it to.*
Simonetta *passes round above table to mirror on wall* l. *Puts handbag down on table, and arranges her hat in a glass on wall* l.)

Silvio! Didn't Andrea say anything about coming back?

Silvio. He will if he can! (*Coming and sitting chair* r. *of table* l.)

Simonetta (l. *of table* l.). But he's going to the Carnival to-night.

Silvio. I'm afraid, dear, he can't! He has to return to Verona at once.

Simonetta. Oh, how absurd! And I've a wonderful frock.

Silvio. Well, he must obey orders. Discipline, you know!

Simonetta. Discipline! A stupid thing invented by men.

Silvio. Well, there'd be no army without it.

Simonetta (*sharply, turns*). Then there'd be no war either!

(Simonetta *crosses round below table* l. *to* l.c.)

Silvio (*mocking* Simonetta). And no beautiful uniform for Andrea either! (*He catches her as she passes, holding both her hands.*) And that reminds me, what's this marvellous frock?

Simonetta. Wait! Wait! It's to be a secret. (*She draws her hands away.*) Oh, you *will* stare! There'll be nothing so wonderful. You'll all be in love with me, every one of you. (*Dancing gaily round.*) I shall have every man in Venice at my feet and—— (*Dances up to* R.C.)

(Silvio *is a little silent and hurt.*)

Silvio (*sitting again; same chair*). Simonetta!

Simonetta (*looking at him and standing still*). That annoys you!

Silvio. Well!!

Simonetta. Don't tell me you're growing jealous, Silvio. (*Moves to divan.*)

Silvio. You're so thoughtless, Simonetta—— (*Breaking off.*) You ought to be more careful——

Simonetta. Why! You *are* jealous!

Silvio. People talk.

Simonetta. Oh? What people? (*A little sharply.*)

Silvio. I don't think you realize how people love to chatter about theatrical affairs——

Simonetta. Why, Silvio, what *have* you heard?

Silvio. Oh, it's nothing. Only this is the sort of thing that makes Ottavia say——

Simonetta (R.C. *catching* Silvio *up suddenly*). Oh! *Ottavia!* Ha! And what did Ottavia say?

Silvio. I don't remember. (*With hand on forehead, feeling bewildered as if coping with something unseen, almost intangible.*)

Simonetta (*a little pettish and stamping her foot*). Tell me.

Silvio. It wasn't anything in particular—it was only the impression she made.

Simonetta. The impression! (*Coming over to him.*) Oh, please don't get jealous, Silvio. It's a new rôle for you. (*Looking at* Silvio, *smiling, to disarm him.*)

Silvio (*still sitting*). I'm always jealous of you, dear. Jealous of every man that looks at you! (*He takes her hands.*)

Simonetta. Otello, indeed!

Silvio. No! No! No—not Otello! (*With a complete change to all tenderness.*) For you know I *trust* you absolutely.

Simonetta (*coaxing*). Well then! Why let Ottavia spoil it all? You mustn't imagine things! Life'll be impossible if you get jealous of all the men who admire me! Why, my dear Silvio (*kneels by his chair*), who do you suppose sends all the flowers I get at the theatre?

Silvio. Oh, it isn't that—— (*Turns his face from her, annoyed, muttering:*) Flowers at the theatre.

Simonetta (*smiling up at* Silvio). Come! Turn round—look at me! Smile!

Silvio (*still looking away*). No, Simonetta. It's always the same; you think——

(*He suddenly turns to* Simonetta. *They look at each other. They embrace.*)

Simonetta. That's right! You make a much better Romeo than Otello, you know!

Silvio (*clasping* Simonetta *to him convulsively*). Oh, Simonetta! you dear, *beautiful child*!

(Simonetta *breaks away fretfully from him at the word "child," crosses up* c. *exclaiming:*)

Simonetta. Child!! Child!!!

(Nino *runs on from* l.u.e. *straight to* Simonetta *and catches hold of her.*)

Nino. Oh, Mamma! Here you are! At last! (*He is about to hug her.*)

Simonetta (*sharply, repulsing* Nino). Oh! do be careful, Nanni! My frock! (*Moves up to* r.c.)

(Nino *breaks away to* l.c., *looking surprised. Instantly her manner changes and she turns to* Nino, *clasping him as she kneels, quite regardless of frock or hat.*)

Darling! Mother didn't mean it! Mother loves you, darling, very, very much! (*Tearing her hat off and flinging it away anywhere.*) Mother's pet! Look, Nanni, pralines! Pralines! Um! For you and me, Nanni! (*Takes sweet-box from stool above divan.*)

Nino. Oh, mother!

Simonetta. Beauties, Nanni! (*Takes sweets out of box and, kneeling to* Nino, *gives him some.*)

(*Enter* Porter l.u.e.)

Porter (*announcing*). The Baron Della Torre!

Simonetta (*kneeling*). Oh, bother the man! We're not at home.

Porter. I'm afraid, Signora, I've already said that you were in.

Simonetta. How stupid of you! Oh, never mind! (*Rises.*)

(*Exit* Porter.)

(*Mood again changing. Her eye falling on her hat and all her good humour returning.*)

Ottavia may follow! (*Picking up hat.*) She gets in a rage over

every new thing I wear. (*Going down* R.C.) This'll exasperate her. (*Putting on hat.*)

(Nino *comes down to her* R.C.)

Silvio. 'Sh! 'Sh! Simonetta!——

Simonetta. Yes, it will! She'll turn green and yellow. Serve her right for making you jealous! (*Turning to* Nino.) Now, Nanni, darling, take your sweeties and run along to 'Milla!

Nino. No, mother, no!

(Silvio *rises.*)

Simonetta. Run along, darling. Mother's coming—(*kisses him*) —mother's coming.

Nino. No, no! (Nino *still hesitates.*)

Simonetta. Oh, do as you're told, child! (*Crosses sharply over in front to glass on wall* L., *arranging hat.*)

Silvio (*rising*). Come along, Nanni, we'll go and find 'Milla. She's up in the nursery, I expect.

(Nino *runs to* Silvio, C.)

(*They go into hall,* Silvio *bundling* Nino *out* L.U.E.)

Simonetta (*picking up bag from table* L., *crosses to divan*). There! Now I'm ready for a dozen Ottavias or boring Barons. (*Sits on divan.*)

(*Re-enter* Silvio, *who goes down* L. *of table* L. *Enter* Porter L.U.E. *announcing* Baron Della Torre.)

Porter. The Baron Della Torre!

(Simonetta *puts bag down on divan.*)

(*The* Baron *enters* L.U.E. *He is scrupulously well-dressed. Might be about* 50, *is rather bald. He doesn't appear to have much brain, and in fact has none.*)

Baron. Ah, Simonetta! (*Coming to her at divan: shaking hands.*)

Simonetta (*rising and greeting* Baron Della Torre *with effusion*). Oh! *Dear* Ettore! How glad I am to see you!

(Silvio *looks unutterable things.*)

Baron. Dear Simonetta! (*Sees* Silvio *down* L.) Silvio! What luck! (*Shakes hands.*) They told me Ottavia's here!

Simonetta. Here!

Silvio. She's in my study looking through some of the theatre accounts. I'll tell her. (*Going towards his own room* L.I.) I know she always likes to know where you are, Baron!

(Silvio *exits down* L. Simonetta *sits on divan.*)

Baron (C.). Most unwise in a wife! it so often leads to most unexpected discoveries. (*Gets chair from* R. *of table* L. *and brings it down to* R.C., *sits, and stretches himself lazily.*) Excellent fellow, Silvio, but quite needlessly expeditious.

Simonetta (*sitting on divan.*) I'd no idea Ottavia was here. How is the dear thing? m so fond of her—she amuses me so much.

Baron. Does she, really? Somehow I never looked on her in that light. But then I'm married to her.

Simonetta. Anyone would know that. You're so seldom together.

Baron. And if we were *never* together, our union would be ideal.

(*Re-enter* Ottavia *from sitting-room* L. *with books.*)

Ottavia. How are you, Simonetta? (*Coming* C.)

Simonetta (*rising and embracing her* C., *greeting* Ottavia *with extraordinary warmth*). Darling Ottavia! Why! My dear! You've actually got a new frock!

Ottavia. Nonsense! You've seen it dozens of times.

Simonetta. Not *that* one, dear, surely! I thought I knew *all* your frocks! (*Moves round her.*)

Baron. I expect you have seen it, because it's just a year ago she got it!

Ottavia. Ettore! This can't possibly interest Simonetta! (*Moves to divan and sits.*)

Simonetta (L.C.). Oh! But it *does*, dearest Ottavia—it does!

Baron. There, I knew it would! You never credit me with any intelligence, Ottavia. I'm sure I don't know why.

Ottavia. Where did you get that pretty hat?

Simonetta (*delighted*). You like it? (*Crosses and sits on lower end of divan.*) It's quite new and absurdly cheap. Only 400 lire.

Ottavia. Really! I saw one just like it at Robiato's for 200.

Simonetta. Indeed! (*Huffed.*) I wonder you don't say it's the same.

Ottavia. My dear Simonetta. It's all one to me. I think nothing of appearances.

Simonetta. Obviously! Dear Saint.

Ottavia. Besides, it's much too much money except for something *really* smart.

Simonetta. You don't think it smart?

Ottavia. Oh, my dear child!

Simonetta (*stamping her foot, furious—rising and going to fireplace* R.). Don't always call me child!

Ottavia. Then don't behave like one. But, of course, Silvio spoils you absurdly.

Simonetta (*faces* Ottavia *across divan*). Silvio trusts me! Yes, in spite of you! What were you saying to him only to-day? (*Standing close to* Ottavia *with flashing eyes and set mouth.*)

Ottavia. To-day?

Simonetta. Yes, to-day.

Ottavia (*looking at* Simonetta). Whatever it was, it was only for your good.

(*Movement by* Baron—*he laughs.*)

(*To* Baron.) And because *I* thought it was right.

Simonetta. Oh, ho!—*you* thought it right! Are you doing me the honour of being *jealous* of me, dearest Ottavia?

Ottavia. Jealous! (*Rising.*) I jealous of you!

Simonetta. Oh, I know you hate me! I'm too happy! I've all the luck! Honour! Fame! You, the *longing* for them——

Ottavia (*furious—but coldly calm*). Come, Ettore. (*Crossing in front of* Baron *towards door* L. *and pausing* C.)

(Ettore *replaces chair by table.*)

(*Enter* Silvio *at same time from his own room down* L.)

(Simonetta *down* R.)

Silvio. Going, Ottavia? (*Crossing to* Ottavia C. *on her* L.)

Ottavia (*turning*). That girl! That girl you trust! But be careful, Silvio! Remember what I told you!

Simonetta. And thank you for that too! I said you were jealous, and you are! Of my happiness! *Our* happiness!

Silvio. Now!! Now!! Simonetta! (*Crosses towards her,* R.C.)

Simonetta. It's true, Silvio! It's true! (*Moves away*).

(Simonetta *is standing with her arms crossed on her breast and is twiddling her fingers on her shoulders.*)

Silvio. Simonetta!

(*She takes no notice.*)

Simonetta, don't twiddle.

(*She goes on.*)

Don't do it, child. Now shake hands both of you. (*He takes* Simonetta's *left hand by her wrist, and she lets it hang quite loosely, so that it flops up and down. He leads her to* Ottavia *and tries to bring them together.*) Come, Ottavia, why can't you be friends? Come, now, shake hands, both of you.

Ottavia (C.). If she apologizes——

Simonetta. *I* apologize! Pfui!! (*Flounces up* R.C. *to* L.C., *meeting* Andrea. Ottavia *goes down stage towards* L.)

(*Enter* Andrea L.U.E.)

Andrea (*as he enters at door*). Back, after all!

(*The* Baron *crosses to* Silvio, *and they stand up stage* r.)

Simonetta (l.c.). Yes! And nice things I hear of you. Not coming to the ball!!!

Andrea. It's not my fault. You must blame my Colonel, Simonetta.

Simonetta. Your Colonel is a bear! (*Turning sharply up to balcony and stays there.*)

(Silvio *and* Baron *nod to each other in comment.*)

Ottavia (l.c. *as* Andrea *comes to* c.). I wonder you deny yourself so much pleasure. It belies your reputation.

Andrea (c.). Oh, surely, Baroness, my poor reputation——

Ottavia. Oh, please don't explain! I'd rather not inquire into it, either here or in Verona.

Andrea. Oh, why not here?

Ottavia. Because you spend half your time here. (*Crosses up* l.c. *to* l.u.e.) But we must be going. Come, Ettore.

(Andrea *crosses to fireplace.*)

Baron. Yes, dear! (*Crossing* l. *to* Ottavia.)

Silvio (*crossing to up* l.). Oh, Ottavia, take me in your gondola, will you? I've an appointment with my costumiers. I forgot all about it.

Simonetta. But—Silvio—— (*Comes down from balcony. Turning to* Silvio.)

Silvio. I shan't be long. Keep Andrea till I come back.

Ottavia. No doubt you will amuse one another. Good-bye, Simonetta. Come, Ettore.

Baron. Yes, dear.

(*Exit* Ottavia *with* Baron l.u.e.)

Simonetta (*up* l.c.). Silvio—don't go!

Silvio (*at door* l.u.e.). My dear, I must—I have that new robe for the last act to try on. If I don't go now it won't be ready in time. I shan't be long.

(*Exit* Silvio l.u.e.)

(*Door slams off.*)

Simonetta (*half-calling after* Silvio). Silvio!

(*A pause.* Simonetta *goes out on balcony and looks out on canal.*)

Andrea (*by fireplace* r.). You don't seem overwhelmed at the prospect of being left to entertain me, Simonetta?

(Simonetta *takes no notice.*)

Don't you hear me?

Simonetta (*with her back to him*). Yes, I hear you!

Andrea. Well?

Simonetta (*with her back to him*). I'm not friends with you.

Andrea. Because I'm not going to the ball? Really, you know, it isn't my fault.

Simonetta. Oh, the ball! (*Coming from balcony down stage* L. *of table* L.) As if I cared!

Andrea. Then what have I done? (*Coming round top end of divan to* C.)

Simonetta. You've a very short memory.

Andrea (*laughing*). "What ignorant sin have I committed?"

Simonetta. Oh, don't quote "Otello"! I'm sick of "Otello"!

Andrea. My dear Simonetta, Silvio has just been telling me he put the play on because you were so keen to act Desdemona.

Simonetta (L. *corner of table down stage*). Oh, Silvio!—he's always doing things for me—he treats me like a child!

Andrea (R. *corner of table* R., *secretly pleased*). Young lady, we are out of temper to-day.

Simonetta. And so do you! (*Turning on him.*) As if you didn't know why I'm cross with you. I wonder you dare to come here again.

Andrea. Simonetta! You don't mean that?

Simonetta. Oh, don't I? Have you forgotten—in the gondola? What do you think would happen if Silvio knew?

Andrea (*relieved at this last remark—smiling easily*). Oh, but he couldn't. How could anyone? We were all alone—out on the lagoon. Simonetta, say you've forgiven me. I was—carried away. I never meant to frighten you.

Simonetta. Your behaviour was absolutely inexcusable! (*Crossing below him to fireplace* R.)

Andrea. Oh no, it wasn't. You know I had a very good—a very real excuse.

Simonetta. What excuse? (*Sits on* R. *side of divan, her back to* Andrea.)

Andrea. You!

(Simonetta *makes a movement.* Andrea *crosses to divan* L. *side.*)

(*Sitting with back to audience on* L. *side of divan below* Simonetta.) Can't you see, my dear girl? Can't you realize what my feelings were? Alone—at night—on the lagoon. All the world hundreds and hundreds of miles away—and just you and I—alone in that gondola. Can't you forgive me that I forgot myself just for one moment—worshipping you as I do?

Simonetta. Andrea!—You mustn't say that!

Andrea. I must! I can't help it—why shouldn't I? (*Rises, trying to hold his passion, then sits again facing audience.*) Can I help loving you?—you know I can't. Simonetta, I thought—just

for one wonderful moment—that you—you too—you were so sweet, so gentle——

Simonetta (*melting*). It was the silence and the water. It soothed the ache in my heart.

Andrea. What ache can you have ? (*Puts hand on her shoulder.*)

Simonetta. Oh ! You wouldn't understand.

Andrea (*bending over her*). Oh, won't you forgive me ?

Simonetta (*playing with the recollection and enjoying it*). You were dreadful, Andrea—you—you hurt my lips !

Andrea (*taking her hand*). Simonetta, can't you forgive me ?

Simonetta. Only—only if you promise never, never to do such a dreadful thing again.

Andrea (*breaking the tension—leaning back on cushions top of divan with broad smile*). My dear girl !—a kiss !—what is there in that ?

Simonetta. A kiss !—you mean a dozen ! And my frock !—it was ruined !

(Andrea *has her hand, he bends over it and kisses it penitently.*)

And think, if Silvio knew !

Andrea. But he couldn't. He was in the middle of Foscari. Every one was in the theatre. We were alone—just you and I—and think, Simonetta, what wonderful heights of happiness might we not have touched that night ! (*His arm gradually goes almost round her—his face close to hers—she is obviously responding to his mood.*) When you lay in my arms—for the first time—and I could feel your soft body glowing against mine——

(Lelio *enters* L.U.E. *about three paces unheard—stands grasping the situation.*)

—often and often I had pictured it so—just what we would do and say when that wonderful moment came at last——

(Lelio *slips out again silently.*)

—and then I frightened you—I lost my head——

Simonetta. It was not that only—remember Silvio.

Andrea. Silvio !

Simonetta. I love him.

Andrea. Yes, but he's no lover for you. Oh, I know he's the kindest fellow in the world—he'd give you anything—but he lives for his work—his heart is in the theatre——

Simonetta. He doesn't understand, and while he pets and spoils me like a child—I myself—my real self—am starving——

Andrea. For love—real love !

Simonetta (*rises and moves down stage.* Andrea *still holds her hand and rises with her*). No, no ! I don't mean that ! And you shouldn't have thought you had the right—I—I'm glad now I stopped you behaving as you did——

Andrea (*below divan*). You don't mean that, Simonetta! You'll come again some other night?

Simonetta. I can't! I can't!

Andrea. Listen! (*Holding her by the arms.*) I'll stay to-night and chance the wigging from my Colonel—and go to the Carnival. In the crowd—you can escape from your party——

Simonetta. No, no! You don't understand! I'm ashamed of myself. Why, if Silvio knew, what would he think but that——

Andrea. No one will ever know—how could they?—and I'll promise to be very—— (*Close to her—his arms round her.*)

Simonetta. No, no!

(*Door slams off.*)

(Andrea *crosses to* L. Simonetta *up to fireplace.*)

(Lelio *enters as if he had seen nothing.*)

(Lelio *takes up a bland right-you-are sort of tone.*)

Lelio. I beg your pardon! (*Coming* C.)

Simonetta. Lelio!

Lelio. Just dropped in to see you, sis. Hope I'm not——

Simonetta. Of course not——

(Lelio *takes cigarette out of case, moves down to* R. *below divan, throwing his hat upon it, as* Simonetta *passes above same to* C.)

Andrea (*moving up* C.). In any case, I must be going. I can just catch the two-o'clock train—forgive my running away.

Simonetta (*crossing to him—going up to door with him*). Silvio will be so disappointed——

(Lelio *goes to fireplace, lights cigarette—grins at this.*)

Andrea. Please explain to him—good-bye.

(Andrea *and* Simonetta *shake hands.*)

(*Adding in an under-tone.*) Till to-night.

(Simonetta *shakes her head.* Lelio *looks up.* Andrea *pauses, wondering if he heard, then exit* L.)

(*Door slams off.*)

(Lelio *looks after* Andrea, *then at his sister with an impudent grin.*)

Simonetta (C., *on the defensive, wondering how much* Lelio *knows*). Well?

Lelio (*with his most aggravating grin*). Honi soit qui mal y pense!

Simonetta. What do you mean by that?

Lelio (*with his back to fireplace*). No more than it usually means. Oh, wise and excellent sister! I'm afraid I sent him off in a bad temper! Did I?

Simonetta (*turning to* L.C.). Why should you ?—I don't understand——

Lelio. He wasn't very polite to me, was he ?

Simonetta (L.C.). Well, Lelio, you don't exactly encourage people to be nice to you, do you ? You know Silvio has practically forbidden you the house.

Lelio. Why ?

Simonetta. You know perfectly well why. There's a limit even to his patience.

Lelio. Well, Venice is an expensive place.

Simonetta. Might I suggest in that case you'd better have stayed in Albano. (*Crosses up on to balcony.*)

Lelio. And be bored stiff ? Or die of malaria ? Not much ! Life's far pleasanter in Venice. Much more exciting too. Discoveries are made in Venice—but one wants money.

Simonetta. Then you'd better make it ! (*Coming down* C.) You've got all mine—and if Silvio asks for a little change I have to lie and say I've given it to the poor. (L.C.)

Lelio. Hardly a lie if *I* get it ! (*His manner changes, becoming more truculent—comes round above divan to* C.) Look here ! I want money—mean to get it. Silvio won't give a soldo, so you see—there's only you.

Simonetta (L.C. *down stage*). And I've nothing.

Lelio (L.C.). Look here, sis ! They've made me Grand Pantalone in to-night's procession. Now that needs money—I've had to order a special costume—and they won't let me have it without the cash. And you, dear sister, will, of course, be only too glad to help me.

Simonetta. I can't. I haven't got it. (*Moves down* L.)

Lelio (*following her down*). Nonsense ! You always have household money.

Simonetta (*speaking thoughtlessly*). I tell you I've only 200 lire——

Lelio (*interrupting quickly*). Ah !

Simonetta (*pulling up*). That Silvio gave me to pay a bill !

Lelio. You can easily get double with a little wheedling. Fools and chestnuts were made to peel. Come on, hand it over.

Simonetta. No !

Lelio. Don't be foolish.

Simonetta. No ! Go, or I'll tell him. I mean it. (*Advancing on him to* L.C.)

Lelio. Well, give me half——

Simonetta. Lelio, I can't—that's my last word. (*Sits chair* R. *of table* L.)

Lelio (C.). I say you will—and that's *my* last word.

Simonetta. Please, Lelio, go—or I'll tell Silvio !

Lelio (*vindictive and ruthless*). Oh, very well ! Tell him ! And

tell him also that a week ago—one night, you weren't playing, I called. You were out—he at the theatre. I went on the lagoons——

(Simonetta *starts.*)

Ah! That interests you——

Simonetta. Not particularly. It's not an unusual thing to do.

Lelio (c.). Quite so! Several gondolas were out. One had closed curtains, and as I passed by I heard whisperings—a name—*your* name.

Simonetta. Mine!

Lelio. In a voice I knew—well. (*Moves to her.*) Now will you give me the money?

Simonetta. No!

Lelio. You won't? (*Turning away, crosses to divan* r. *for hat.*) Then perhaps Silvio will! (*Coming* c.)

Simonetta (*rises*). Lelio! You don't mean—— (Lelio *up* c., *a little to* l. *Going to his* r. *hand.*)

(Lelio *turns and looks at* Simonetta.)

You can't mean—you'd *tell* him!

Lelio (*shrugging shoulders*). Under the circumstances, why not?

Simonetta. Oh, but—but—you don't understand—you're wrong —— (*Losing her head a little.*) You're making a ridiculous mistake——

Lelio. Am I?—and when I came in just now and found you in his arms—was that *my* mistake—or *yours*?

Simonetta (r.c.). Oh, my God! (*She picks up bag from divan.*)

(*Door slams off.*)

(*Enter* Silvio *and* Ottavia: Ottavia *remains rather at the back.* Lelio *nods to* Silvio *in a friendly, perfectly at home manner.*)

Lelio. Hullo, Silvio!

Silvio (*very curt*). Oh! It's you, is it? (*Down* l. *of table* l.)

Lelio (c.). Yes, me! You needn't frown. I'm just off!

Silvio (*wheeling round to table*). Excuse me, I've an important letter. (*Sits in large chair* l. *of table* l.)

Lelio (*at* r. *of table*). One moment! I won't keep you, but I want to tell you about a visit I paid to the lagoons lately.

Silvio. I'm sorry, I've no time——

Lelio. It concerns Simonetta.

Simonetta (r.c.). Lelio! (*In a distressed undertone.*)

(Silvio *looks up.*)

Lelio (*is thoroughly enjoying the situation, playing with it for all he's worth*). I maintained that—(*slight pause*)—even the swiftest

gondola took twenty minutes from here to the Lido. We bet—on it and I stand——

Silvio (*interrupting and then writing*). Well, you've won—they take half an hour as a rule.

Lelio (*turning to* Simonetta *and going to her*). You hear! Well! Are you going to pay?

(Simonetta *gives the money—she is obviously upset. She goes below divan to fireplace. Throws her purse on divan.*)

Thought I should win, sis, dear. You see how foolish you were to pit your wits against mine. Ta-ta! (*Going to door.*) So long, Silvio.

Silvio. Good-bye.

(*Exit* Lelio l.u.e.)

(Ottavia, *who has watched up stage, drops down to* Simonetta.)

Ottavia (*at top end of divan, above stool*). What bet was it?

Simonetta. You heard! (*Facing fire without turning.*)

Ottavia. You know very well how long the gondolas take——

Simonetta (*wrought up and nearly on the brink of tears*). Oh, well, what does it matter anyway? (*Moves away up to balcony.*)

Ottavia. H'm! (*Watching her. At divan picks up a woman's little bag for handkerchiefs, which she has left. In going to door, she stoops over* Silvio *at top of table whispering:*) Silvio, are you blind? She *had* to give the money.

Silvio. Had to? What do you mean?

Ottavia. He's some hold on her. She's some secret! Ask her! Ask her! If you'd keep your home—happy.

(*Exit* Ottavia l.u.e.)

(Silvio *sits lost in thought.* Simonetta *tries to leave the room unnoticed, going down towards door* r. *He calls her back quietly but in low, firm, concentrated tones, never moving or looking at her.*)

Silvio. Simonetta!

Simonetta (r.c.). Well! (*Pause.*) What's the matter now? What's she been whispering?

Silvio (*sitting at table*). What should she?

Simonetta. How should *I* know? She hates me enough for anything!

Silvio. Don't speak like that, Simonetta! Come here.

(*She does so, coming to* r. *side of table.*)

Tell me, why did you give Lelio that money?

(Simonetta *is silent.*)

I warned you not to let that young wastrel sponge on you any longer.

Simonetta. He's my brother.

Silvio (*gently*). I know, dear—but he has imposed on you shamefully, and I'm not going to allow it any longer. That wager was all nonsense. Why did you give him that money?

(Simonetta *is silent.*)

Silvio (*a hint of something rather terrifying in his tone*). Answer me, child! Why did you?

Simonetta (*blurting out anything, and struggling to subdue her rising hysteria*). He—he made me!

Silvio (*suspicious, alert*). Made you?

Simonetta. Don't you believe me?

Silvio (*again the hint of storm*). Yes! Yes! But how? How could he *make* you?

(Simonetta *shrinks back.*)

(*With a sudden change.*) Oh, don't look so frightened, dear. Only tell me the truth.

Simonetta (*breaking down*). I can't! I can't! There's nothing to tell. (*Moves to* R.C.) Nothing! Nothing!

Silvio. Simonetta! (*Rising, going to her and turning her round.*) I trust you as I trust God!

Simonetta. Leave me alone! Leave me alone!

Silvio. Don't have a secret from me.

Simonetta. Secret! Secret! (*As if going to tell, then checks herself.*) Oh! Leave me alone, for pity's sake! (*Breaking into hysterical sobs.*) Leave me alone!

(Simonetta *rushes from the room by door down* R.)

Silvio *looks after her. Then, raising his hands to his brow, dazed, he turns and walks slowly towards chair by writing-table.*)

Slow Curtain.

ACT II

SCENE.—*The same room. Evening of the same day. Coloured lanterns, festoons of flowers, etc., turning the balcony into a kind of fairy bower—against the deep blue of an Italian night.*

(*Music of mandolins heard.*)

(CURTAIN *rises.*)

(*In the room the* BARON *is sitting very comfortably in chair* R. *of table* L., *smoking a cigarette and drinking.* SIMONETTA *is in the room off* R., *dressing for the Carnival.*)

SIMONETTA (*from room*). Enjoying yourself, Ettore ?

BARON. How can I—with you—so near and yet so far ?

SIMONETTA. Don't talk platitudes. How's the wine ?

BARON. Divine ! Inspiring !—my blood's on fire ! Long life to Bacchus, the only god that never dies !

(*Music swells.*)

(*A burst of revelry, with a whirl of mandolin music outside as a large gondola passes—a man's voice heard singing "Barcarole."*)

SIMONETTA (*in room*). Oh, listen to that ! (*Sings with the music.*)

(BARON *rises, goes to window at back to watch revellers.*)

Isn't it gorgeous ? My feet are positively itching for the Tarantella !

BARON. Come out and see. (*Goes out on balcony.*)

(*Laughter heard off.*)

(SIMONETTA, *in a dressing-gown, runs out, carrying a large powder-puff.*)

Look, Simonetta ! They're simply mad with merry-making.

(*Revellers' laughter heard off.*)

SIMONETTA (*out on balcony*). Oh, the colours ! Look at that party there—the Harlequin ! What a wonderful figure he makes. He ought to be an actor if he can pose like that.

(*A burst of voices from below :* "Simonetta !" "Signora Steno !" *etc.*)

Oh, it is !—I believe it's Stanzo, the dancer !

(*A bunch of loose flowers is thrown up from below—they break in a shower over* Simonetta.)

Oh! Oh! Signor Stanzo, is that you?

(*Loud derisive laughter from below of one man.*)

He won't tell. (*Calling down.*) That's not fair! You know me.

(*Same loud laughter further off.*)

I am sure it was Stanzo.

(*Dances into room to the tune of the mandolins. Throws powder-puff on table* L.)

La, la, la, la, la, la!—La, la, la, la, la, la!

(Baron *follows her. Bus.: she makes him dance with her.* Baron *sinks into chair* R. *of table* L. *exhausted.*)

Oh, what a pity you're not coming to the ball to-night! (C.).

(*Music dies away.*)

Baron (*breathless, in chair*). Ottavia won't let me. She says the mentality of a ballroom is unsympathetic to her.

Simonetta. Oh, you coward! Are you a slave? Why don't you rebel for once?

Baron. I tried that—long ago—but I'm too old for rebellions now. (*Drinking wine.*)

Simonetta. Nonsense! You're as young as I am—if you dared to be. (*Calls off to room* R.) Camilla! Camilla! my sandals! (*Goes into room* R.)

Baron. Oh, allow me. (*Rises and goes to door* R.)

Simonetta. No, no, no! (*Shuts door in his face.*)

Baron. Oh, do let me help——

Simonetta (*peeping through the door*). Think of Ottavia.

Baron. Ottavia be——!

Simonetta (*at door*). Hush! She's in that room. (*Nods towards door across* L.)

Baron (*startled*). What? (*Looks at door down* L.)

Simonetta (*at door*). With Silvio. (*Opens door wider and puts her head in.*) You needn't be afraid. It's not as if she was in this room. What's the time?

Baron. A quarter past ten. (*Looks at clock on mantelshelf.*)

Simonetta (*at door*). Pfui! I must hurry. I hope Silvio's getting dressed. Surely those wretched accounts must be done by now.

Baron (*sits on end of divan*). But I thought Silvio wasn't going to the ball?

Simonetta. Not going? Who told you that?

Baron. Ottavia. She said there had been some trouble—what

was it, Simonetta? (*Edges nearer* Simonetta.) You can confide in me.

Simonetta. What are you talking about?

Baron. Oh, she told me all sorts of things. There was quite a scene—Silvio was jealous of some mysterious admirer—Simonetta, do tell me—— (*With a wicked grin—whispering.*) Who's the happy man? (*Rises.*)

Simonetta. You wicked old thing!—it's all nonsense! That wife of yours is a scandalous mischief-maker.

Baron. Yes, yes, but Lelio! What had he to do with it? That's what I couldn't understand.

(Simonetta *coming on further.*)

Simonetta. Be quiet! You're not to say another word about it. It's all Ottavia's invention.

(*Music starts again.*)

There wasn't any scene, and anyway, there's been quite enough unpleasantness about it already without you fanning the flames—now I'm going to dress.

(*Goes in.*)

(Baron, *alone, dances across awkwardly to table* L., *has a drink, then loud laughter off stage—sees door ajar—tiptoes to it—as he gets to it it is shut sharply in his face.*)

Baron. Simonetta, let's see the frock.

Simonetta (*inside*). You're a wicked old man. Go away!

Baron. Just a peep.

Simonetta. I'm not nearly ready. Besides, it's a secret.

Baron. Well, let's see how far—you've got.

Simonetta. Well, you may look at my sandals—there—— (*Puts one foot out.*)

Baron. That's only one.

Simonetta. There's the other. (*Holds the other in hand.*)

Baron (*taking sandal, and dancing up* C.). Let me put it on!

Simonetta. No, no, give it back! (*Etc.* Simonetta *enters with one sandal on and hops round stage chasing* Baron, *who has the other. Finally she sits on end of divan.*)

Baron. I insist on putting it on! (*Etc.*)

Simonetta. Oh, very well—be quick!

(*The* Baron *kneels and is kissing her foot when* Ottavia *enters* L.I. *to find him on his knees before* Simonetta.)

Ottavia. Really! Ettore!

Baron. Oh, ah—— (*Jumps up, utterly nonplussed and nervous.*)

Ottavia. Don't move. The position suits you admirably.

Simonetta. Don't be angry, dearest Ottavia. I don't want him at my feet.

(*Slight pause.*)

Well, now you've begun you may as well finish, Ettore *dear.*

(*She holds out her* L. *foot and* Baron *puts the sandal on.*)

Ottavia (L.C.). Is the shoe so small that it takes so long? (Baron *rises to* R.)

Simonetta. Small! Small! It's much too big. Look! (*Turns towards* Ottavia *who is* C., *and quite daintily kicks the shoe off nearly into* Ottavia's *face.*)

(Baron *enjoys this—and runs to pick it up and moves over to above table* L.)

Oh, dearest Ottavia, I'm so sorry! (*To* Baron.) Why didn't you catch it? Clumsy!

Ottavia (*moves to* R. *of table* L.). Ettore! Go at once and find our gondola. Silvio has an important message I must take at once to the theatre.

Baron (*throws sandal to* Simonetta). Yes, dear. (*Bus. of kissing hand to* Simonetta—*stops at door.*)

Ottavia (*turning and catching him*). I said "at once," Ettore.

Baron. Yes, darling.

(*Exits* L.U.E.)

Simonetta (*slips on sandal*). Is Silvio ready?

Ottavia (*sitting down at* R. *of table* L.). Ready? For what? The ball? I'm afraid he has more serious things to think about. (*Gets some papers out of drawer in table* L.)

Simonetta (*crossing front to door* L.). But——

Ottavia. Please don't disturb him. He's very much upset.

Simonetta (*turning*). Upset? Why? Has Lelio——?

Ottavia. No. For once it's not your brother. Silvio has had a wire from the author of the "Bacchante" that the play is to be done first in Rome.

Simonetta. Oh, is *that* all? (*Crossing to* C.)

Ottavia. All? Isn't it enough?

Simonetta. Enough to stop his taking . . . me to the ball? I never heard such nonsense! (*Full of mischief and dancing a few steps of Tarantella.*)

Ottavia. Simonetta—— (*Goes to her.*) Can't you realize what this means to him? It's perfectly absurd your behaving in this babyish fashion. Instead of being a help to your husband, you're an absolute drag on him.

Simonetta. How dare you say that! You're trying to set him against me. (*Gesture by* Ottavia.) Oh yes, you are! Only to-day he's been quite changed—you're poisoning our happiness.

Ottavia. Really!

Simonetta. What did you whisper to him?

Ottavia. What did your brother say to you?

Simonetta. That's my affair!

Ottavia. And Silvio's.

Simonetta. Anyway, it's nothing to do with you. But for you we should be perfectly happy. (*Goes to door* L.) Silvio! Silvio!

Silvio (*in room* L.). In a moment, Simonetta.

Simonetta. No, now, please! I want you. (*Crosses* R.)

(Silvio *enters* L. *He is in evening dress—dinner-jacket—he looks worried. He has a letter in his hand. His manner to* Simonetta *has changed somewhat, although he is very gentle.*)

Silvio. Well, dear, what is it?

Simonetta. I want to speak to you.

Silvio. Well?

Simonetta. Must I ask you to send her away?

Silvio (L.). My dear Simonetta, surely you can speak before Ottavia?

Ottavia (C.). Of course, if Simonetta wishes me to go . . .

Simonetta. She does.

(Silvio *up* L. *of table* L., *and* Ottavia *moves down towards door* L.I.)

Ottavia (*as she crosses* L.). Then, why not say so quietly. Such a fuss about nothing!

(*Exit down* L.)

Silvio. What is it, Simonetta? I'm frightfully busy.

(*Busies himself at table* L.)

Simonetta. But the ball? You'll be late. (*She sits on end of divan.*)

Silvio. The ball? Oh, that! I'm afraid we shan't be able to go to the ball.

Simonetta. Not go!

Silvio. You see, I have a long and important letter to write to-night. You've no idea what this means—the "Bacchante" being produced first in Rome.

Simonetta. What does it mean? I don't understand. (*Imitating* Ottavia's *voice.*) I suppose Ottavia does—but you never let me share any of your worries.

Silvio. My dear, don't you realize what a help Ottavia is to me?

Simonetta. Can't *I* help?

Silvio (*rather surprised*). You? (*Moves over towards her.*) Oh, my dear child, your gay wings would droop and your beauty fade, cooped up in that room, doing accounts.

Simonetta. Then let it.

Silvio (*humouring her*). Oh, oh! and what would the public do without their beautiful little idol? No, no! you were made for sunshine and joy. (*Moves to* L.C.)

Simonetta. And you ?

Silvio. I—oh, I'm the magician who makes the sunshine and the beautiful setting for the little idol—eh ? (*Moving to door* L.) Now I must go back——

Simonetta. Silvio——

(*He stops with his back to her.*)

You treat me like a child. Do you really mean that you're not going to the ball ?

Silvio. Certainly, dear. (*Turns towards her.*) Haven't I just told you ? This unexpected development——

Simonetta. But what has that to do with the ball ?

Silvio (*very gently—almost like explaining to a child*). Well, dear, it's like this. (*Puts letter on table.*) My reputation and the theatre's are both at stake. (*Moves to her.*) I've made it the first in Italy, among the first in the world. A new production at my theatre is of interest to all artistic Europe.

Simonetta. Does this one play matter so much ?

Silvio. My dear, it's a magnificent play—probably the finest I have ever had—with a wonderful part for you—the " Bacchante " —you know I read it to you.

Simonetta. Of course, I know all that—but we'll do it all the same some time, I suppose.

Silvio. But don't you understand, they've broken their promise. The first production has been taken out of my hands. It is a direct blow to my position—to the status of my theatre.

Simonetta (*getting peevish*). Oh, well, bother the old play, and the wonderful part, too ! Let it go.

Silvio (*slight pause—hurt and sorry*). You know that is impossible, Simonetta. (*Moves away to table* L.)

Simonetta. Surely, at least, it will wait till the morning ? It needn't make us late for the ball.

Silvio (*quietly*). We are not going to the ball.

Simonetta. But I'm dressing ! I'm almost ready !

Silvio (*quietly and steadily, but still rather as if he were correcting a child*). Simonetta, you know perfectly well why we are not going.

Simonetta. Do I ?

Silvio. I've not yet had your explanation of the scene with your brother.

Simonetta. Oh ! You are going to bring that up again ? (*Moves round to fireplace.*) I thought we'd . . . done with that this morning.

Silvio. You told me nothing this morning.

Simonetta. Because I'd nothing to tell ! Can't you believe me ?

Silvio. My dear, I only *want* to believe you. I can't bear to have this mystery between us—won't you tell me ? Surely it is easy to explain ?

(Simonetta *moves round top of divan.*)

Don't you see the wretched boy was practically blackmailing you—that is obvious—otherwise how could he *force* you to give him that money ?

Simonetta. He didn't—it was a bet.

Silvio. Nonsense ! The bet was ridiculous. You can't expect me to believe that. And you yourself said " He made you." How could he do that ?

Simonetta. I said that this morning.

Silvio. Well ?

Simonetta. Never mind what I said this morning. I didn't mean it. I was upset. (*Sits on end of divan.*)

Silvio. Simonetta, you are making it worse and worse. How can I help it ? Your whole manner was so strange. Don't you see, d[illegible] how it must make me think—— (*Sits near her on divan.*)

Simonetta. Think—what ?

Silvio. All sorts of things—things that I don't want to think—that no man wants to think about his wife. Won't you trust me, Simonetta ? (*Takes her hand.*)

Simonetta. Won't you trust me ? It's new for you—this suspicion—this jealousy. (*Rising, breaks away to fireplace.*)

Silvio. Jealousy ? Why do you say that ? Is there any reason —any cause for it ?

Simonetta. How should there be ? You make me miserable. (*Beginning to cry—both hands to her face, her back to him.*)

Silvio (*rising, going to her*). Simonetta ! (*His arm round her.*)

Simonetta. Your sister is setting you against me.

Silvio. No, only warning me.

Simonetta. Much the same thing, isn't it ? (*Looking up at him.*)

Silvio. For your sake, Simonetta.

Simonetta. For my sake ! Against whom, pray ? (*Takes his handkerchief out of his outside top pocket.*)

Silvio. That's what I want to know. Don't think I'm speaking through jealousy or suspicion—don't think that. I want to shield you—to protect you against harm——

(*She cries, using handkerchief. Pause.*)

Simonetta, you love me, don't you ?

Simonetta. Silvio—you know ! (*Arms round his neck, cuddling him.*)

(*He holds her tight.*)

Silvio. Yes, dear, I know. I know ! And you gave this money—why ?

Simonetta (*on his* r. *shoulder*). Because—because he was in difficulties. (*Begins to cry again.*) He said he had to have it.

SILVIO. But only three days ago I'd given him money myself, and his allowance is ample.

(*She puts back* SILVIO'S *handkerchief.*)

Has anyone done or said anything to frighten you? You're so young—so impulsive—you've been a trifle unwise, perhaps made some stupid mistake; and quite needlessly—quite needlessly you're afraid of someone—and Lelio knows and is trading on it. . . .

(*She breaks away. Comes top of divan and sits on stool.*)

That's all, isn't it?

SIMONETTA. Know. What should he know?

SILVIO. That's what I want you to tell me.

SIMONETTA. He knows nothing. How should he? (*Rises and goes up* C. *at little to* L.)

SILVIO. Why? Simonetta!

SIMONETTA. There's nothing to know, I tell you—nothing! Nothing! (*She turns her back to him.*)

(SILVIO *at top of divan. Her words say one thing—her manner conveys another.* SILVIO *is disappointed and still in doubt.*)

SILVIO. If there's nothing—how could he force you to give him that money? Don't you see that's impossible, dear? Don't you? (*Angrily.*) Answer me, Simonetta!

SIMONETTA (*losing control of herself and stamping her foot*). I won't—I won't answer any more. You're torturing me—you believe anything your sister says against me.

(SILVIO *moves up and on to balcony.*)

And I've done nothing—nothing, but you don't love me—you don't believe me—or you'd trust me—but you don't—you don't! (*Coming down* R.C.) And I've no one to help me—no one to believe me!

(*She breaks down, throwing herself full length on the divan.* SILVIO *quickly comes to her.*)

SILVIO (*kneeling by the sofa, his arms round her*). I do love you—my dear, dear child. I do love you—— It's because I love you that I can't bear this mystery. (*Between* SIMONETTA'S *sobs—his hand to his head, dazed.*) I don't know what's happened to-day—there's a new world born, I think—full of ugly thoughts . . .

(SIMONETTA *sobs.*)

Simonetta, don't cry so. I do trust you and believe you—always—always. Now, now! we won't say any more about it now. Perhaps later on you may be able to explain—but not now; not now! Kiss me—Simonetta—kiss me. There now, finish your dressing—and we'll go to the ball—after all——

Simonetta. To the ball? (*She sits up and he holds her hands.*)

Silvio. Yes, don't you want to now? It'll do you good. Drive away all these ugly mysteries.

Simonetta. Yes, yes! Oh, how good you are to me, Silvio! (*Her arms round him.*)

(*They kiss.*)

Silvio. My dear, I live to please you—now hurry, hurry!

Simonetta. But your letter—the play?

Silvio. I'll send a long wire now to Rome—and write fully after the Carnival. It will only make a few hours' difference.

Simonetta. Of course. How splendid! Hasten then—(*rises*)—I'm almost ready. (*Moves to door* R.)

Silvio (*moves to door down* L.) I shan't trouble to get into fancy dress—just a domino—we'll race—who's ready first——

Simonetta (*all smiles again by now*). Oh, I'll win easily. (*Goes out by door* R., *closing it after her.*)

(Silvio *over to door of his study* L.I.)

Silvio (*calling off*). Ottavia! Ottavia! (*He turns to table* L., *sits, and writes wire, turning on table lamp.*)

(Ottavia *enters down* L.)

Ottavia, dear, will you send this wire on your way to the theatre? Then I shall write fully to Rome to-night—now, let's see, what's his address?—after the ball, lodging a formal protest——

Ottavia (*coming* L.C. *and getting above table*). After the ball? Are you going after all, then?

Silvio (*writing*). Yes, yes, I've promised Simonetta.

(Ottavia *raises her hands and sighs.*)

(*Hearing her.*) Oh! I know everything you would say, Ottavia. Weak, soft-hearted, spoil the child! I know—I know, but it's no good arguing, my dear. I'm in love—madly, wildly in love—and with my own wife—thank goodness!

Ottavia. She has explained—then?

Silvio (*finishing the wire*). No, no! But she will—later on, when she's not so upset, so wrought up.

(Ottavia *throws her hands up unseen by* Silvio, *and moves up to* L. *of window.*)

Remember, she's young—we must make allowances for youth. Alfieri Theatre, Venice. Now there's the telegram. (*He reads it through, then puts out table lamp and moves up to* Ottavia L.C.) If you'll be so good as to send it on your way—(*he is up* C. *by this time with her*) . . . and a thousand thanks, my dear sister—for all your help and advice.

Ottavia. Which you don't take.

Silvio. Don't say that, Ottavia. I don't know what I should do without you.

Ottavia. Neither do I. Well, you can't say I haven't warned you. I tell you if you let this pass you're living in a fool's paradise.

Silvio. Well, that's better than a wise man's desert—eh?

Ottavia. You don't really think that, Silvio?

Silvio (*with a sudden change*). Don't you see, Ottavia? I *must* trust her—I love her so—I must *trust* her——

Ottavia. You're a child, Silvio—you're both just a couple of babies——

(*She goes out* L.U.E.)

(*Music starts off* L.)

Silvio (*goes to door* R., *knocks*). Simonetta! I've sent the wire.

Simonetta (*off—from room*). Has Ottavia gone?

Silvio. Yes.

Simonetta (*off*). Thank Heaven!

(*Water effect starts.*)

Silvio. Now, now, now, Simonetta—be good! Don't spoil your victory.

Simonetta (*her head out of door*). Victory?

Silvio. You've got your way—as you always do—so be charitable to poor Ottavia.

Simonetta. Stop talking rubbish and go and dress—we're dreadfully late—I'm ready.

Silvio. Let me see the frock. (*Tries to peep in.*)

Simonetta. No, no, it's a secret.

(*Music and water effect swells.*)

No one is to see it till we get to the ball.

Silvio. Not even me?

Simonetta. Not even you.

Silvio. Then give me a kiss instead.

(*Water effect stops.*)

(*She kisses him through the door—just her head showing.*)

(*He laughs and runs into his room down* L.)

(*As* Silvio *goes into his room the mandolin music from a gondola outside grows nearer—a head appears over the balustrade on the balcony—it is* Lelio *dressed in a vivid green domino and green mask. He peers into the room, climbs over on to the balcony.*)

Camilla (*heard off* R.). I'll get it for you, madame.

(Camilla *enters from* Simonetta's *room.*)

(Lelio *hides behind curtain, then seeing who it is, sneaks out, catches* Camilla *as she passes from behind and kisses her.* Camilla *turns, sees the green mask, and gives a frightened scream.* Lelio, *with a quick* "Hush," *raises his mask.*)

Camilla (*screams*). Signor Lelio! Oh, you wicked devil, you! How you startled me! (*She is on his* L.)

Lelio. Just a foretaste of what's to come at eleven o'clock, eh, Camilla?

(Camilla *tosses her head.*)

Where's your mistress? She hasn't gone yet, has she?

Camilla. No—they're dressing now—there's been some trouble again—scenes! The Director seemed very much upset.

Lelio. Oh, did he? (*With a grin.*) I'm not surprised. (*He dances down* R.)

Camilla (*coming* R.C.). I thought they would never get ready—it's past ten o'clock—she's been in such tantrums! I thought I shouldn't see you to-night after all.

(Lelio *kisses her hand.*)

Lelio. Look, Camilla! (*Showing a handful of notes, from his pocket.*) I'm in luck! We'll have everything we want to-night! (*Moves away delighted.*)

Camilla (*delighted*). Oh! where did you get it?

(*Music stops.*)

Lelio. Never you mind—that's telling! But you've got to pay for your share of the fun too. You must do something for me. Get your mistress out here to me. I've a message for her.

Camilla. I daren't! The Director may come out of his room any moment.

Lelio. Well then, listen. I've got a crowd of the boys and girls outside waiting for me. We'll serenade the house—then you open the door and we'll all come in and dance and play the fool—then I'll have my chance.

(*Tarantella music starts.*)

Simonetta (*off* R.). Camilla! Where are you?

(Lelio *goes up to balcony again*—Camilla *follows him.*)

(Giuseppe *enters* L.U.E., *watches them unobserved.*)

Lelio. Another little foretaste, eh?

(*Kisses her again—gets over balustrade.*)

You understand?

(*Drops over and disappears.*)

(CAMILLA *left alone, laughs, hums tune of the mandolins, which have been going faintly all through this, looks round the room for powder-puff of* SIMONETTA'S *she came to find; sees it on table* L.—*looks at the balcony, laughs, shrugs her shoulders and says* "Little devil!"—*gives herself a little hug in anticipation of the mad merrymaking to come.*)

(GIUSEPPE *comes in from door where he has been standing, coughs aggressively*—CAMILLA *jumps with a little scream.*)

CAMILLA! Oh, it's you. What a start you gave me!

GIUSEPPE. Guilty conscience, my girl—— (*Moves to door* L.)

CAMILLA. Thank Heaven I'm *not* your girl—old bear!

GIUSEPPE (*stops at door*). You mind that evil eye. Carnival's a dangerous time for flighty young things like you. (*Knocks at* SILVIO'S *door and goes in.*)

CAMILLA. Oh, and are you such a saint? I could tell a tale or two about you if I choose—old enough to know better, too! Sour grapes—that's what's the matter with you!

(*Music grows loud.*)

(*She goes back to room. As she gets to door* R., *the mandolins swell out and a concerted number of voices break into a lively serenade under the balcony.*)

Oh! (*Runs to window—listens.*) Ah, Dio mio! The good God is in my feet! (*She begins to move to the tune of the mandolins, which is a catchy, fantastic dance time.*) They feel like little angels and fly—fly!—(*she is dancing lightly now*)—like leaves along the ground.

SIMONETTA (*in the room*). Camilla! Camilla!

CAMILLA. Ah, Signora! Come quickly! Come quickly! the serenaders! Come and see, Signora! (*Dances up to the balcony.*) Oh, Dio mio! The beautiful black eyes!

SIMONETTA (*comes out—now in a domino over her dress*). Serenaders? (*Clasps her hands.*) Ah, the Tarantella!—the dance of our mountains!

(*Revellers below the window shout to* CAMILLA, *who is on the balcony —a confused noise of voices and laughter.*)

CAMILLA. I'll bring them in, Signora.

(*Exit* L.U.E.)

(*Big shout of voices.*)

SIMONETTA (*clapping her hands*). Oh, what fun! Wouldn't Ottavia be angry!

(*The outer door has been opened by* CAMILLA, *and a confused noise of voices, laughing, singing, etc., swells out into the hall. They dance into the room,* LELIO *amongst them has* CAMILLA *round the waist.*

They are all masked, of both sexes, grotesquely dressed in bizarre dominoes, masks, etc.)

Arrangement of Revel.

Order of Entrance (a short pause between each entrance):

1. Cecco (*dressed as Pierrot—Pagliacci*).
2. Lelio *and* Camilla.
3. Grazzo *and* Nella.
4. Colia *and* Sandro.
5. Dionigi *and* Lady-masker.
6. *Two* Guitar *and* Mandolin Players.
7. Lucio *and two* Lady-maskers.

Cecco *dances into* c. *of stage, then down* r., *around divan and then up on balcony.*

Lelio *and* Camilla *dance on to* r.c. Camilla *joins* Cecco *on balcony.* Lelio *goes behind divan and then gets on it.*

Grazzo *and* Nella *dance on to* c., *down* r., *round divan up stage* r.c. *at top of divan.*

Colia *and* Sandro *jazz on down* l.

Dionigi *and* Lady-masker *on to* c., *down to footlights, up* c., *break away.* Dionigi *moves chair* r. *of writing-table* l. *to above it to clear stage.*

Musicians *enter playing and sit on steps of balcony* l.c.

Lucio *and two* Lady-maskers, *one on each arm, rush on yelling and laughing down* c. Lucio *swings two ladies round first half to* r., *and then half to* l. *Then he imitates a* Cock crowing, *which is the* cue for the Grand Chain.

By now all in their places for Grand Chain, *with the exception of* Cecco *and* Camilla, *who are on balcony and pelt the dancers with roses, and* Simonetta, *who has worked down* r. *below divan.*

The Chain *goes* once round until all *are in their original places. Then* Lucio's *two* Ladies *run to* Simonetta, *dragging her to* c. *of stage. All the rest form a circle round them, with their arms on each other's shoulders, and dance round them* one complete circle to the r., and one to the l., *and the three* Ladies *in the* c. *doing the reverse. Then all break away, laughing and shouting, up to the balcony, carrying on the excitement in dumb show, and pelting imaginary gondolas that are supposed to be passing below, except* Simonetta, *who sits on divan, exhausted, pelted with roses by* Lucio's *two* Ladies *before they go to balcony, and* Lelio, *who drags the writing-table chair back to its place, and falls exhausted into it.*

Lelio (*rising to* c.). Simonetta!

Simonetta (r.c.—*recognizing her brother*). Lelio!

Lelio. Oh, clever sister! (*Raises his mask.*)

Simonetta (*rises*). How dare you come here! I'll call Silvio! (*Crosses* Lelio *to* l.)

Lelio. Silvio be——! . . . He's here.

Simonetta. He—who?

Lelio. Andrea. The rich, generous Andrea.

Simonetta. If you don't go away, I will call Silvio. He's in that room. (*Moves to door* l.)

Lelio (*showing her a note*). Wait! I've a message for you.

(Camilla *shrieks with laughter.*)

(Simonetta *dashes to* r., *followed by* Lelio, *who puts his mask on.*)

Camilla. Ah, Madonna mia! Ha, ha, ha! (*Comes down pursued by a masker* (Grazzo). *The masker catches her.*) I—know you—you're Carlo Marinetti!

Grazzo (*in a squeaky voice*). I swear I am not.

Camilla. Yes, you are. If Gemma knew, she'd scratch your eyes out for you.

At cue—"If Gemma knew, she'd scratch your eyes out"—*general break-up starts:*

1. *General outburst of laughter.*

2. Silvio *enters, with his Carnival domino on, followed by* Giuseppe. Silvio *comes on to about* l.c., *and stands waving the* Maskers *away good-naturedly. Sees* Simonetta *and* Lelio, *who is giving her the note.* Giuseppe *turns out light in* Silvio's *room as he enters.*

3. Lelio, *as soon as he sees* Silvio, *leaves* Simonetta, *dashes round divan to* Colia *and* Sandro, *who by this time have worked down* r.c., *pushes* Sandro *on to divan, and mockingly kneels before* Colia *with his hand on his heart.* Silvio *goes to him and taps him on shoulder, ordering him out, but not recognizing him,* Colia *catches* Silvio *by the right hand,* Lelio *by the left, and swinging him round twice, crying,* "Come to the Carnival, Signore," *and then exit last, still laughing.*

The exit of the others has been taking place throughout this, starting as soon as Silvio *is on.* Giuseppe *follows the last ones out, leaving* Silvio *and* Simonetta *alone.* Silvio *runs to balcony, waving to the* Maskers *below and throwing roses at them.*

(*General outburst of laughter.*)

(Simonetta *quickly reads the note, and throws it on fire. She turns to go to her room again.*)

Silvio (*coming down from the balcony*). Who was the green mask, Simonetta ?

(*Music dies away.*)

Simonetta. Green mask ?
Silvio. He spoke to you. (*Moves to down* L.)
Simonetta. That ! Oh, that was—er—Clelia——
Silvio. Clelia—Tommaso's wife ?
Simonetta. Yes.
Silvio (*with a laugh*). I thought it was a man. (*At door* L.)
Simonetta (*laughing, too*). She—she's dressed as Pantalone.
Silvio. Oh, I see. What was the message ?
Simonetta (*taken aback*). Message ?
Silvio. I thought she gave you a message.
Simonetta. No, no ! She wanted me to go with them, that's all.
Silvio (*surprised, and puzzled*). Oh, but didn't she give you a note ?
Simonetta. No, no ! Now hurry, hurry, Silvio ! Go, order the gondola. We shall be fearfully late—— (*She runs off into her room* R.)

(Silvio *left alone, looks after her still puzzled—shrugs his shoulders—turns up as* Giuseppe *enters with a telegram on salver*, L.U.E.)

Silvio. But surely—oh, Giuseppe, the gondola. The Signora is quite ready.
Giuseppe. Yes, Signore—a telegram. (*Holds it out on salver.*)
Silvio. Oh dear !

(Simonetta *re-enters from her room* R.)

Simonetta. What is it, Silvio ? (*Moves to* C.)
Silvio. A telegram—— (*Makes a face at* Simonetta.) More worries, I suppose—just when I hoped we had banished them. (*Opens it.*) I hope it's not Donati . . . (*Slight pause.*) I've been afraid of this all day.
Simonetta. What is it—the play ?
Silvio. No, no—it's Donati !—he's dying—I must go at once.
Simonetta. Go—where ?
Silvio (*deeply moved*). My old master—he's dying and he's asking for me—— (*To* Giuseppe.) Giuseppe, a time-table, quickly. . .

(Giuseppe *gets one from the table* L. *and looks up trains—he gets to* L. *of table* L.)

and put some things in a bag—anything will do.
Simonetta. You're going—now ?
Silvio. To Milan—if there's a train to-night.

Simonetta. To-night—but you promised——

Silvio. I know, I know, dear, but read that. (*Gives her telegram.*)

(*Goes near to table, watching* Giuseppe.)

Simonetta. But—it may not be serious—and—and I can't be left alone—please, please, Silvio, don't go to-night.

Silvio (*very upset*). My dear child, *I must*!

Simonetta. Not to-night—wait till the morning—not to-night.

Silvio (*struck by her unusual carnestness*). Why not to-night?

(Giuseppe *has found a train.*)

Giuseppe. There's only one train, Signore—in twenty minutes.

Silvio (*looks at watch*). Twenty minutes, I can just do it, I think.

Simonetta. For my sake, Silvio, don't go——

Silvio. My dear Simonetta—they implore me so earnestly—it's my duty. (*Moves to* Simonetta r.c.) I'm very, very sorry—but if you think, dear——

Simonetta. Think!

Silvio. You'd understand—I can't——

Simonetta. Oh, I understand—you value your old manager—more than you do your wife.

Silvio. That's not fair, Simonetta! What are you afraid of? You've been left alone before.

Simonetta. A thousand things.

Silvio. Who can harm you? (*Nearer to her.*)

Simonetta. But you promised, promised, Silvio—— (*Puts her arms round his neck.*) And I've looked forward so to the ball—and my frock—the secret with its special meaning.

Silvio (*humouring the child again*). I know, I know, dear—it's hard lines—but you understand, don't you? If I stay now, I should regret it all my life. (*He removes domino, throwing it on head of divan.*) Heavens! I'll lose the train. You'll be perfectly safe here in the house. Promise me you'll stay in the house.

Simonetta. Safe? Safe? The maskers came. Why not others?

Silvio. What others? No, no, the servants are here.

Giuseppe. It will be quite safe, Signora, Camilla only let the maskers in because they were with Signor Lelio.

(*Slight pause.*)

Silvio (*surprised*). Signor Lelio!

Giuseppe. It was his party, Signore.

Silvio. Oh no, Giuseppe, you're mistaken, surely.

Giuseppe. No, Signore, did you not see him in the green domino?

(*Slight pause.*)

Silvio. Green domino?

(Simonetta *stands perfectly still.* Silvio *turns to her.*)

—but that was—— (*He stops as he suddenly realizes what this means.*) Simonetta! You told me——

Simonetta. It's a mistake—Giuseppe is making a mistake—how could it be Lelio?

Giuseppe. No, Signora, I saw Signore Lelio myself.

(Silvio *goes suddenly to* Simonetta, *takes her by the shoulders—turns her to him.*)

Silvio. What is this, Simonetta? What does this mean?

Simonetta. Let me go—you frighten me! Are you going to make another scene—before your servant, too? . . .

Silvio (*moves to* Giuseppe). Giuseppe! Tell Antonio to get the gondola at once.

(*Music starts.*)

(Giuseppe *goes out discreetly* L.U.E.)

(*Goes to* Simonetta.) Now, Simonetta. What is the explanation of this?

Simonetta (*wildly*). Silvio, don't go! Don't go! You promised.

Silvio. Child—I don't understand—what does this mean?

Simonetta. It's all a mistake. (*Becoming incoherent.*) And I want to dance with you—only one dance, Silvio—the Tarantella—the dance of our mountains!

(*Music swells.*)

Silvio. Simonetta—be calm.

Simonetta. Calm! Calm! I'm mad!—mad with Spring and Carnival and youth—and you want to coop me up—youth, rose bloom and violet crowned—the music's in my blood—— (*Crossing up to balcony.*) Listen! Out there on the piazza—the mandolins—and the tambourines rattling——

Silvio (*up* L.C.). Simonetta! Simonetta! Listen to me.

Simonetta. Oh, the dancing and the laughing. Silvio! Silvio!

Silvio. Child, child, listen to me. I don't understand—my mind is in a whirl.

(*Music dies away.*)

(Giuseppe *re-enters* L.U.E. *with black cloak.*)

Giuseppe. You'll miss your train, Signore. (*Helps* Silvio *into cloak.*)

SILVIO. I know, I know. I'm coming! (*Taking his hat which* GIUSEPPE *has placed on table* L.).

(GIUSEPPE *goes out.*)

Before I go, Simonetta, you *must* tell me.

SIMONETTA. Silvio! Silvio! (*Throws herself into his arms, clinging to him—her arms round his neck.*) I entreat you—beloved! Husband, don't go! Don't go to-night.

SILVIO. Child, child! (*Fighting.*) I've all my life to give to you—he only asks an hour.

GIUSEPPE (*off* L.). Signore, the gondola—you'll be late!

SILVIO (*distracted*). I *must* go—when I come back—you must explain then—— It must wait—good-bye! good-bye! (*Kisses her.*)

SIMONETTA. Silvio! I'm afraid! (*Clinging to him.*)

(*Pause.*)

SILVIO. Afraid? Afraid of what? Oh, God! I can't stay! My mind is staggering—if you could tell me—only explain—before I go—I can't—I can't refuse—he's dying—till to-morrow? Promise me you will stay in the house—stay here in the house—till to-morrow! till to-morrow!

(*During this she has clung to him, sobbing and crying. He tears himself away almost by force and exits* L.U.E.)

(*Door slam off and water effect.*)

(SIMONETTA *listens, sinks on to divan and cries.*)

(GIUSEPPE *enters with* CAMILLA—GIUSEPPE *clears his throat.* SIMONETTA *does not hear*—CAMILLA *clears hers.*)

SIMONETTA (*looking up suddenly*). Well, what do you want?

GIUSEPPE (R.C.). If—the Signora would forgive me——

CAMILLA (C.). But the Signor being gone away——

GIUSEPPE. And the Signora not going out——

CAMILLA. And Nino asleep——

GIUSEPPE. And we not wanted——

CAMILLA. And the cook, and the porter, and the housemaid, and everyone gone——

SIMONETTA. I see—you want to go to the Piazza San Marco, too?

CAMILLA. It is so merry there! Signora!

SIMONETTA. And the beautiful Carlo will be there, eh, Camilla?

CAMILLA (*with an artful smile*). Ah! Is he not beautiful, Signora?

SIMONETTA. Well, I've no objection—you can go. Put out the big lights. They hurt my eyes.

(Giuseppe *goes to switch on wall* R. *and* Simonetta *indicates standard lamp, and* Giuseppe *switches it off.*)

Giuseppe } Camilla } (*together*). { Ah, Signora, a thousand thanks—a thou- sand times——

(*They move to* L.U.E.)

Giuseppe. The Carnival! Come, Camilla!

Camilla. I'm not going with you—what do you mean, you bag of bones—you Golgotha! (*Exit* L.U.E.—*followed by* Giuseppe.)

(*Mandolin is heard being played off.*)

(*This is supposed to be playing in a passing gondola, and as the mandolin music is dying away in the distance, the far-away voice of* Andrea *is heard singing the Serenade accompanied by a guitar. This grows gradually nearer and nearer, until he is singing below the balcony, and the swish of the water from the gondola oar, which also has been increasing in effect, ceases.*)

(Simonetta *sits thinking, crushes up telegram and drops it on divan and slowly rises and exits into her room* R.)

(*Serenade commences. At commencement of second verse,* Simonetta *re-enters, listens, recognizes* Andrea's *voice, crosses hurriedly to* L.U.E., *calls.*)

Simonetta. Camilla! (*Pause.*) Giuseppe! (*Pause.*)

(*Then slowly goes up to the balcony listening to serenade. As it dies away, she comes down from balcony and is going to her room as* Andrea *climbs over the balcony; he is in a wonderful fancy costume as* Harlequin, *over which hangs a domino.*)

Andrea (C.). Simonetta! (*Comes into room, removes his mask.*)

Simonetta (*switches on standard lamp by door* R.). Why are you here? It's madness!

Andrea. I've watched the house for hours. First your sister-in-law—then the maskers——

Simonetta. Sent by you——

Andrea. And then Silvio. Did you get my note?

Simonetta (*shrugging her shoulders*). You need not have troubled —I'm not going . . .

Andrea. Not going? Where has Silvio gone?

Simonetta. To Milan. To Donati.

Andrea. And leaves you?

Simonetta. As you see.

Andrea. Alone! (*Struck by this.*) Then there's no ball—no pleasure for you. And you've looked forward to it a whole year.

Simonetta. As you see.

Andrea (*half to himself*). He's left you! To-night—alone! (*Watching her.*) Why?

Simonetta. Because he prefers his friend. (*Turns to fireplace.*)

Andrea. And the dress—the wonderful secret. It will never be seen now?

Simonetta. Don't I know it? You mustn't stay now. I'm upset—I'm not myself.

Andrea. My dear girl! I'm so sorry. It's a terrible disappointment.

Simonetta. Oh, don't pity me! You only make it worse. You must go—at once—I'm all alone. (*Sits on divan with her back to* Andrea.) Hasn't there been enough trouble already?

Andrea. All the servants are out, too? (*Suddenly makes up his mind.*) Simonetta—(*moves nearer divan*)—let me stay—only a few moments—no one will ever know. I can't leave you upset like this——

(*Moves to table* L., *and puts domino on chair* R. *of it.*)

Simonetta. No, no!

Andrea. We'll have a little Carnival of our own—all to ourselves. (*Fills wine-glass on table.*) See! I'll pledge you. To my queen! The queen of my Carnival! (*Drinks gaily.*)

Simonetta. Andrea, I'm ill—I'm terribly upset. You must go at once. (*She collapses on divan.*)

Andrea (*crossing to her with glass*). Simonetta! My dear little Simonetta! Come, drink this. (*Gives her wine.*) It will do you good. That's better. Why, the roses are all coming back again. (*With infinite tact and tenderness he coaxes her to drink, never doing anything to frighten her.*) The Queen of the Carnival is herself once more. (*Kneeling to her.*) What can I do to bring the smiles back? Simonetta, you were made for joy.

(*The wine has revived her—she raises herself and smiles at him.*)

There, there, that's better—the wine is doing you good—but you've scarcely sipped it yet.

(*Gives her some more, she drinks, reviving, raises herself with a little laugh of relief.* Andrea *puts glass on stool by divan.*)

Why, Simonetta, you're dressed for the ball!

Simonetta. We—we were just going—when that wretched wire came.

Andrea. And the dress—the wonderful secret—have you got it on?

(Simonetta *nods half smiling, half crying.*)

Oh, let me see it! (*Kneels on divan and seizes her hand.*)

Simonetta. No, no! (*Rises, and* Andrea *brings her round divan to* C.)

Andrea. Why not? All the world was . . .

(*Music starts.*)

(*Again the effect of a gondola passing.*)

. . . to have seen it to-night—and now I—I alone—think, Simonetta, how happy that would make me.

(*She shakes her head, but not very convincingly.*)

And we'll dance—you and I—just you and I alone in here!—to the music from the lagoon—listen—come throw off your domino and let me see!

Simonetta. No, no, Andrea! You mustn't!

Andrea. Ah, Madonna! But I must—you are so beautiful—so wonderful through your tears—let me worship you—my queen! If I may not love you, Simonetta, let me worship at your feet.

(*Music dies away.*)

(*He approaches behind her—very gently—very carefully doing nothing to startle her. She stands wavering, shrinking—yet soothed, healed by his gentle worship.*)

May I not? Madonna mia!

(*Very slowly and with exquisite enjoyment, he takes her domino, and almost inch by inch, he unveils her till it slips finally from her. She stands before him in a vision of beauty in her carnival dress. It is a beautiful Bacchanti dress—wound round her—with vine leaves twined about it and in her hair. As she stands shrinking timidly from his gaze, she seems almost like the picture of some beautiful, frightened elf-child.*)

(*Thrilled, overwhelmed.*) "Bacchante! Bacchante!" (*A step back.*)

(*She nods, smiling timidly.*)

Your dress for the play?

(*She nods again.*)

Simonetta—Simonetta! (*He is struggling with his emotions—trying to keep them in check.*)

Simonetta. It—it becomes me?

Andrea. What can I say? You are wonderful! Wonderful!

(*He approaches her slowly, gently he puts his arms on her bare shoulders and draws her slowly to him. She makes no attempt to stop him. His touch thrills her—slowly he bends his head and kisses her on the mouth—he whispers hoarsely.*)

Simonetta! Come with me!—out there on the lagoon no one will ever know. This hour was made for us—just this one hour——

Simonetta. Madonna! Madonna!

Andrea. My beautiful Bacchante! Just this one hour! (*Kisses her neck.*)

(*Yielding in his arms, she almost gives way.*)

Simonetta. No, no! You must go—go!

Andrea. . . . No one will ever know——

Simonetta. I don't love you—I can't—I can't!——

Andrea. My gondola's here—waiting!

Simonetta. No—go!—go!—I tell you—go!!! (*Pushes him away.*)

(Andrea *is suddenly sobered by her tone.*)

Andrea. Simonetta! You won't?

Simonetta. No, no, I'm mad—I'm mad! Leave me alone! Leave me alone! (*She turns away and sinks on divan.*)

Andrea (*slowly*). I'm sorry. I would do anything rather than —than distress you. You—you must blame your own beauty. You should not have let me worship you—that was all I asked—(*takes up his cloak, moves* L.U.E., *then stops—abruptly*)—I'll go.

(*He goes out* L.U.E.)

(*Door slam off.*)

Simonetta's *movements here are as follows:*

1. *After* Andrea's *exit she rises from divan and moves round to fire and crouches in front of it.*

2. Andrea *is heard singing.*

3. Simonetta *listens, tempted, then puts her hands to her ears to shut out the sound of his voice, saying,* "No, no," *then weakens, falters: laughs and rises, and goes a little way to door* L.U.E., *again thinks better of it, but the song proves irresistible, and after one or two weak attempts to master herself laughs hysterically, picks up her domino, which* Andrea *left on the floor* C. *and rushes off to* Andrea L.U.E., *switching off lights which are at* L.U.E. *as she goes.*

(*Door slam off.*)

(*The serenade stops as* Simonetta *is heard outside calling,* "Andrea! Andrea, take me with you!" *and their two voices are heard very indistinct. Then the serenade starts again, with the sound of the water from the gondola oar, both dying away in the distance.*)

(*The stage is empty a few seconds, and as the singing and a gondola is heard going away,* Nino *is heard outside* L.U.E. *calling.*)

Nino. Camilla! Camilla!

(Nino *enters in his night-shirt. He is frightened. Goes to door down* R., *opens it.*)

Camilla! Mamma! They've all gone! I'm frightened!—Mamma! (*He sobs quietly, crouching by fireplace.*)

(*Outside, a gondola arrives*—Gondolier *cries.*)

Gondolier. Sty-ee!

(*Door slam off.*)

(Silvio *enters and hears the boy crying.*)

Silvio. Nanni! Nanni! (*Switches on lights* L.—*goes to him.*)

Nino (*coming to him*). Oh, father—is that you? Where have you been?

Silvio (*lifting him up*). Little Master Inquisitive, I went to the station—but on the way I saw I was too late, so came back. Why aren't you in bed, Nanni? (*Puts him on divan.*)

Nino. I'm frightened. I can't make anyone hear.

Silvio. Camilla is out dancing, I expect. And Mamma is asleep. (*Holding* Nino *on divan.*)

Nino. No, no!

Silvio. I expect she is, Nanni—as you ought to be.

Nino. But I looked—she's not in her room.

Silvio. Not in her room? Are you sure?

Nino. Quite—I saw her go out.

Silvio. You saw her go out? Go out?

Nino. There was such a noise in the street, I couldn't sleep. I was looking out of the window, and I saw her hurry out.

Silvio. Are you sure of this, Nanni? Was—was—Mamma alone?

Nino. No, father—she went in a gondola.

Silvio. In a gondola! Who—who was with her? Think, Nanni, think very carefully.

Nino. A domino—father, you're hurting me!——

Silvio. Don't cry, Nanni, it's all right—it's all right! Tell me. What was the domino like?

Nino. I couldn't see. Father, I'm cold—so cold. (*He cries and* Silvio *comforts him.*)

Silvio. There, there, little man, don't cry. Mother will be back soon. Don't cry, Nanni. There, now you can run off to bed and sleep. (*Puts him on floor.*)

Nino. To bed?

Silvio (*quite quietly*) . . . and sleep. Can you, eh, Nanni? (*Takes his cloak off and puts it on end of divan.*)

Nino. Yes—now you've come back——

Silvio. Then come along and I'll carry you to bed.

Nino. Pick-a-back!—father! Pick-a-back! (*Jumps on divan.*)

Silvio. Pick-a-back!—all right, old man—— (*Picks him up on his back.*)

Nino. And you, father——?

(*Pause.*)

SILVIO. I—oh, I shall wait up for mother. (*Carries him off* L.U.E.)

NINO (*heard off* L.). And can I go to the Carnival to-morrow?

SILVIO. Yes, you can go to the Carnival—— (*Heard off* L.)

NINO. And see Brighella, etc., etc.

SILVIO. You shall see Brighella and Pantalone. Now try and sleep, little man. Good night, my boy, good night!

(*Light in passage is turned out.*)

(SILVIO *re-enters* L.U.E., *comes to* C., *pauses, undecided what to do, goes up on to balcony, hears Revellers' laughter, comes back to switch* L., *turns out remaining lights, crosses to arm-chair by fire, and sits as an hysterical burst of laughter is heard off* L.)

CURTAIN FALLS.

(*Fire is put out before* CURTAIN *rises. When* CURTAIN *rises,* SILVIO *is discovered standing on steps,* R. *end, looking out. Door slam is heard and he hides behind* CURTAIN.)

(SIMONETTA *enters* L.U.E., *takes tottering steps—a voice in the dark says:*)

VOICE. Thank God! Oh, thank God!

(SILVIO *switches on lights by switch wall* R., *revealing* SIMONETTA *in the* C. *of stage—her dress is disordered, hair disarranged, face flushed. At sight of her,* SILVIO *gives an amazed cry. The sudden light dazzles her, she sways slightly—both give a startled cry, then they stare at each other.*)

SIMONETTA. Silvio! (*Drops cloak.*)

SILVIO (*up* R., *still lost in amazement*). Simonetta! What are you——?

SIMONETTA. Silvio!

SILVIO. Bacchante! Bacchante!

SIMONETTA. Silvio!

SILVIO. Where have you been—with whom? (*Advancing to her.*)

SIMONETTA. I went alone—alone!

SILVIO. A lie!

SIMONETTA. No, no!

SILVIO. I say it's a lie—you were seen——

SIMONETTA. Ah!

SILVIO. Who was he? Tell me? God! You that I trusted! Now I see it's all true. The hints, the warnings—all, all true. (*Seizes her.*) I forced myself to believe, and all the while you were deceiving me! (*Turns her round and throws her on the divan.*)

(*From now on both talk together simultaneously—the words though distinct—overlapping.*)

Simonetta. No, no, it's not true, Silvio. I begged you to stay —if you hadn't gone and left me——

Silvio. I forced myself to believe—but it's true! His name—tell me that—will you? Answer me! His name! (*Gets hold of her throat and tries to strangle her—shrinks back and covers his face with his hands.*)

Simonetta. Silvio! Don't kill me—don't kill me!

Silvio. Will you answer—will you?

(*She scrambles up and rushes from the room into her own, banging and bolting the door behind her.*)

(*He stands dazed, then with a heart-breaking cry, falls on to the divan—sobbing.*)

Curtain.

To face page 57.

ACT III

SCENE.—*Green Room of Alfieri Theatre during performance of "Otello." Door* R. *leading into* SIMONETTA'S *dressing-room. Double doors* C., *opening on to corridor. Through this opening is seen double green baize swing doors which lead on to the stage. Fireplace down* L. *with large mirror over it. Table* R.C. *with an armchair on either side of it. Settee by fire* L.

(*At rise of* CURTAIN *the double doors* C. *are open. Various members of the company are discovered. It is the following night and the performance of "Otello" is in progress, the* ACTORS *and* ACTRESSES *being dressed for their parts.* SANDRO *as Roderigo,* DIONIGI *as Cassio,* COLIA *as Bianca,* TOMMASO *as a Senator,* NELLA *as Emilia,* CLELIA *as a Court Lady,* CECCO *as Montano.* SANDRO *is walking about studying his part—the others sitting about.*)

(*As curtain rises,* NELLA *enters by green baize doors as from stage.*)

Positions at opening of Act:

SANDRO *pacing up and down back of stage, studying a part.*
TOMMASO, *spectacles on, seated in chair* L. *of table* R., *reading newspaper, his wig and hat on table.*
DIONIGI *seated on settee* L.
COLIA *powdering herself before mirror over fireplace* L.
LUCIO *seated in chair before fireplace* L. *His pipe is by the chair.*

LUCIO (*before curtain rises*). We had just turned the corner and were running for our lives——

(*Curtain rises.*)

—when the gondola arrived and we all escaped in the nick of time.

NELLA (*entering—throwing up her hands* C. *with a theatrical gesture*). Dio mio! He is marvellous! (*Coming down* C.)

(SANDRO *stops walking at* L.)

COLIA (*by fireplace*). Who—the chief?

NELLA. It's amazing! He frightened me—absolutely frightened me in that scene—and he's the third Otello I've played with.

COLIA. What's the matter with him? He seems all wrought up.

TOMMASO (*seated in chair* L. *of table* R.). He always is in this play—it's the part—now, I mind me when I played——

Nella. Ah, but not like he is to-night. (*Crosses to* Colia L.) Lend me your puff, darling. (*Snatches it.*)

Colia. Oh, don't mind me. (*Moves to* C., *then crosses to below table* R.)

Nella. I don't.

Dionigi. He's evidently upset about something.

(Clelia *enters* C. *from* L. *by passage, and stands* C. *up stage.*)

Colia. It can't be business. (*Moves to above table* R. *and sits on it facing* L.)

Nella. The house is crammed.

Dionigi. And Simonetta's never been finer.

(*General chorus of agreement.*)

Clelia. To me, of course, there's always something amateurish about her. Now, if I played Desdemona !——

Nella. Ah yes, dear—but you never will !

(Clelia *moves down to chair* R. *of table* R.)

(*A general laugh at* Clelia's *expense.*)

(Stage Manager *enters* C. *doors from stage.*)

Stage Manager. Ssh ! Ssh ! Ladies and gentlemen ! Please be quiet. You can be heard on the stage, and the Director's in a devil of a temper.

(*Exits hurriedly again* C. *door on to stage.*)

(Nella *puts her tongue out at him.*)

Nella. Old fuss-pot !

(*General laugh.*)

Sandro (*walking about*). Oh, do be quiet !

(Nella *sits on settee* L.)

How can a poor devil get a chance with you chattering magpies ? " Oh, damned Iago ! Oh, inhuman dog ! "

Nella. Poor Sandro ! Such is the fate of an understudy—but you've got on very well up to now.

Sandro. I've said my words anyway—but I can't get this scene with Iago—" Oh, d—d Iago ! " I know I shall dry up over " d—d Iago." Here—(*to* Colia)—hear me, like a good girl. (*Gives her his part above table* R.C.)

Clelia. Oh, is that to-night's paper ? (*She snatches newspaper from* Tommaso *across table.*)

Tommaso. Away, woman, away ! (*Snatching paper back.*) I paid for it myself !

Clelia. Selfish old pig. (*Takes up sewing from table.*)

Colia. Who went to the Carnival last night ?

Nella. Sandro—so he's got no money to-day.

(*General laugh.*)

Sandro (*up* c.). And have to go on for an understudy at an hour's notice without a rehearsal and *with* a splitting head. " I have no great devotion to the deed."

(*General laugh.*)

Nella. Never mind, old man, I'll stand you supper at Florian's after the show.

Sandro. Nella, you're a trump—(*goes and kisses hand over back of settee. Colia advances with his part, up* c. *he joins her*)—" 'tis but a man gone "—(*draws his sword*)—" forth my sword he dies ! "

(*Enter* Cecco *as Montano through green baize doors ; comes down* c. *between* Colia *and* Sandro, *parting them.*)

Cecco. A drink !—for the love of Heaven. I'm as dry as a lime kiln. (*Moves to fireplace.*)

Colia. Another reveller. Oh, Carnival ! Carnival !

Sandro. (*To* Colia, *whose attention has wandered.*) Oh, do keep to the book !

Nella. There's nothing here—but the chief's Chianti.

Cecco. I shall expire if I don't get a drink somewhere.

Lucio (*rising*). I say, do tell me—is my nose on straight ?

(Call Boy *enters* c.)

Call Boy. Beginners for the second scene, please.

(*Exit into passage* c.)

Sandro. That's me !—Oh Lord !—Here, give me the book. (*Snatches book from* Colia.) " Oh, inhuman dog " (*going*). Crook your thumb for me, Nella. " Oh, d—d Iago "—Oh, d—n William Shakespeare ! I wish he had never written this damn play !

(*Exits on to stage through baize doors* c.)

(*General laughter.* Colia *up* r.c. *continues laughing, rocking herself to and fro.*)

Cecco. What's the joke, Colia ?

Colia. He—he's been studying the wrong scene !

(*Another shout of laughter which stops as doors open—applause heard.*)

(Simonetta *enters dressed as Desdemona.*)

Simonetta. Has anyone seen my brother ?

(*They shake heads, say* " No," *etc.*)

Dionigi——

(Dionigi *rises.*)

would you mind asking the Stage Manager to come to my room—at once, tell him—it's important.

Dionigi. With pleasure, Signora.

(*Goes out on to stage through baize doors to stage* C.)

Tommaso. The play's going wonderfully to-night, Signora.

Simonetta (C. *wearily*). Wonderfully.

Nella. What a house ——

Simonetta. Splendid, isn't it? (*Moves down to* R.)

Nella. And I've never seen Signore Steno so magnificent—he absolutely terrified me in the handkerchief scene.

Simonetta (*who is moving to her room* R.—*stops a moment—stares at* Nella). Yes, yes—I noticed that—he was terrif—wonderful, wasn't he?

(*She goes slowly into her room* R.)

(*The* Call Boy *returns from stage.*)

Call Boy. Everybody for Scene Two, please—Scene One just finishing. (*He stands up* L., *watching them all.*)

Colla. Oh, lor'! (*Moves up* C. *on to stage through baize doors.*)

Cecco. Street scene!—that's me!

(*Exit through baize doors.*)

Lucio. Where's my pipe?

(*Dances out through baize doors* C.)

(Clelia *slowly rises, passes round above table to* C.)

Nella. Scene Two!—that fool of a dresser's late again! (*Move up stage quickly.*) Heavens, I've no cloak! What am I to do?—Dresser! Dresser! Where are you?

(*Exits into passage* C. *to* L. *They all exeunt but* Clelia *and* Tommaso.)

Clelia (*going to* Tommaso *and tapping him on the shoulder*). Didn't you hear the call, Tommaso? You'll be late.

(*Exit on to stage* C.)

Tommaso. No hurry, lovey, no hurry! There's lots of time. (*Rises, takes up wig and hat, moves to settee* L., *puts hat and newspaper on settee—puts wig on looking in mirror—repeats:*) There's lots of time.

(*Enter* Grazzo C.)

Grazzo. Tommaso—Tommaso, you're late!

(Tommaso *moves up quickly, then comes back to get his hat off settee, muttering.*)

Tommaso (*mutters*). My hat.

Grazzo. You've got your glasses on.
Tommaso. God bless my soul, so I have.

(*Exit both hurriedly* c. *to stage.*)

(Call Boy *crosses to door* r., *knocks.*)

Call Boy. Scene Two, if you please, Signora.

(*Goes up as* Stage Manager *enters hurriedly.*)

Stage Manager. Where is the Signora ?
Call Boy. In her room, Signore.

(Call Boy *exits up* c., *closing inner double doors.*)

(Simonetta *comes out of her room* r., *carrying note.*)

Stage Manager (c.). You've sent for me ? I've just a moment, Signora. It's just on the end of the scene.
Simonetta (r.c.). Grazzo—I want you to do something most important for me—I can't trust anyone else. Find my brother. He is somewhere in the audience. Give him this note. It must reach him immediately—you understand ?
Stage Manager. Certainly, Signora, I'll go round the moment I've rung up Scene Two.
Simonetta. It's very urgent—and very private—no one else must see it—*no one* !
Stage Manager. You can rely on me, Signora. I'll see that he gets it immediately.

(*Applause heard off.*)

Ah, there's the end of the scene, I must fly.

(Simonetta *hands him the note.*)

(*As she hands it to him, the doors swing open and* Silvio, *dressed as Otello, sweeps in. He is breathless from the scene and obviously worked up to a pitch of excitement, which he is struggling to control.*)

Simonetta. Remember, it is very urgent. (*Gets* r.)

(Silvio *sees note, stops still, watching.*)

Stage Manager. I quite understand, Signora, I'll see to it.

(*Turns to go and sees* Silvio, *who comes down* c.)

(Grazzo *exits* c.)

Silvio. What was that you gave him ? (*Moves to near table* r.c.)
Simonetta. Nothing.
Silvio. Nothing ?
Simonetta. Nothing of any importance.
Silvio. Why this comedy ? Do you think to deceive me again ?

Simonetta. Silvio—(*going to him*)—if you would only let me explain.

Silvio. Explain! Explain! Don't you think we've had enough of explanations?

(Simonetta *turns away.*)

Come here!

(*She turns, half afraid of him, comes slowly to him.*)

Let me look at you. They say blushing betrays guilt, but you're pale—even beneath your make-up. (*Looks at her long, silently.*) You still say you went to the Carnival with Lelio?

Simonetta. I said that.

Silvio. You maintain it?

Simonetta. Yes.

Silvio. Very well, we'll see. (*Moves to fireplace, takes up towel to mop his face, from mantelshelf.*) I've sent for him.

Simonetta. What's the use? You don't believe *me*. You won't believe *him*.

(Call Boy *enters* c. *from stage.*)

Call Boy. Your entrance, if you please, Signora.

(Giuseppe *enters by passage* c. *from* r.)

Simonetta. I'm quite ready.

(Giuseppe r.c. *bows to her.*)

(Call Boy *holds green door:* Simonetta *goes out on to stage.*)

Silvio. Well, you found him?

Giuseppe (*moves to* Silvio *down* l.). Yes, Signore. After the procession last night, Signor Lelio went over to Lido. He only returned to Venice an hour ago.

(Lelio *is seen to come and stand watching play on stage behind baize doors.*)

Silvio. Where is he?

Giuseppe. Outside, on the stage. I brought him with me.

Silvio. Good—bring him here—at once.

Giuseppe. Yes, Signore.

(Giuseppe *goes to baize doors and opens them. As baize doors open lines of "Otello" are heard:*)

Iago. Unless his abode be lingered here by some accident wherein none can be so determinate as to the removing of Cassio.

Roderigo (Sandro). How do you mean, the removing of him?

(*As soon as green baize doors close. Voices stop.*)

Giuseppe. Signor! Signor Lelio! The Director is here—in the green room.

(*Enter* Lelio *as usual perfectly nonchalant and at ease, and* Giuseppe *exits off* L. *by passage* C.)

Lelio. I say, what the devil's up? This is a new honour for me—to be sent for by the great Signor Steno. It's usually the other way about.

Silvio. Come in, Lelio, come in—I want to have a chat with you—sit down. (*Indicates armchair* R.)

(Lelio *takes off opera hat, and closes and puts it on table, then sits.*)

Silvio (*near fireplace*). Make yourself comfortable—help yourself to some wine.

Lelio (*staring at* Silvio). I say, what on earth's come to you? Why this unwonted generosity? Do you want to borrow money of me?

Silvio. Pshaw! It's Carnival. By the way, you were a great success last night.

(Lelio *fills his glass.*)

Lelio. Pantalone? Yes, I flatter myself the compliments I received were well deserved. I don't believe there's a better clown in Venice. (*Drinks.*)

Silvio. Indeed no. We all admired you greatly.

Lelio. We?

Silvio. Yes, we. Didn't you see us?

Lelio. Why—you weren't there at all.

Silvio. Who said that?

Lelio. Della Torre—I was just talking to him—in the wings—you went to Milan.

Silvio (*hiding his annoyance*). Nonsense, I was at rehearsal this morning.

Lelio. Oh!

(Grazzo *enters through baize doors* C.)

Silvio. I started to go to Milan. But I was too late.

(Grazzo *now up* C. *in green room, suddenly sees* Silvio—*hides his surprise.*)

Lelio. Really!

(*The* Stage Manager (Grazzo) *makes a slight sign to* Lelio *and shows paper. Seeing* Lelio's *attention has been distracted,* Silvio *turns sharply round and sees the* Stage Manager.)

Silvio (*to* Grazzo). Well, what is it? (*Turns back and looks in mirror.*)

Stage Manager. The second scene is just finishing, Signore.
Silvio. Yes! Yes, I'll be there. I'll be there.

(Grazzo *tries to attract* Lelio's *attention to the note in his hand.*)

Stage Manager (*still trying to gain time*). It's getting near, Signore. (*Points to note in his hand.*)

(Lelio *understands.*)

Silvio. Yes, yes, yes.
Stage Manager. You won't miss your entrance? (*Puts note on base of column* R. *of* C. *door.*)
Silvio. Of course not—of course not! (*Turns again to mirror.*)

(Grazzo *exits* C.)

(Lelio *has risen to get note and as* Silvio *suddenly turns, covers his confusion by drinking* Silvio's *health.*)

Lelio. Alla vostra salute, generous one! (*Drinks and looks over at note, meaning to get there gradually.*)

(*Applause off.*)

Silvio (*innocently*). Alla vostra! (*Moves up to baize doors.*) So you see, as I missed the train——

(Silvio *half opens doors to hear his cue.*)

—I went to the Carnival instead. (*Listens.*)

> Iago. Emilia, run you to the citadel,
> And tell my lord and lady what has hap'ed—
> Will you go on, I pray, this is the night
> That either makes me or fordoes me quite.

(*Applause heard off.*)

(Lelio *has followed* Silvio *up stage, placing himself* L. *of* R. *column base so that he can take note unseen by* Silvio.)

Lelio. Forgive me, you went to bed——
Silvio. Eh? (*At door.*)
Lelio. Giuseppe told me just now—you went to bed.
Silvio (*suspicious—holding green baize doors open*). You seem to have learned a lot about my movements last night.
Lelio. I have a flair for learning *what* I wish *when* I wish.

(*Applause heard.* Silvio *closes green baize doors and comes down and looks in mirror and touches up his make-up with face towel, with his back to* Lelio. Lelio *having secured note, moves down* R.C. *crushing it in his hand, to hide it from* Silvio.)

You are funny, Silvio. Why can't you tell me straight out what it

is you want to know? (*Moves to arm-chair* L. *of table and sits.*)

SILVIO. Well, then—who were you with on the Piazzo St. Marco last night? (*Watches* LELIO *in mirror.*)

LELIO (*slowly opening the note*). Ah ha, that's a secret and perhaps a valuable one.

SILVIO. Then if it's so very valuable, perhaps I wouldn't mind paying for it.

LELIO. Ah, now you're talking. (*He opens paper, turning away from* SILVIO, *and quickly reads it.*)

SILVIO. Name your own price.

LELIO. A hundred lire.

SILVIO. You shall have your hundred. Now tell me who it was?

LELIO. Why, who should it be but—— (*Turns and looks at* SILVIO.)

SILVIO. Well? Well?

LELIO. But, Simonetta.

SILVIO (*who has seen all the business with the note from* GRAZZO'S *entrance with it, in the mirror*). Ah, then that was why the message was so urgent.

LELIO. Eh?

SILVIO. That note you've just read—from Simonetta.

LELIO. What do you mean? (*He rises, ill at ease, with his hand behind his back, hiding the note.*)

SILVIO. I've watched the whole wretched business ever since Grazzo entered. Give it to me.

LELIO. I'm damned if I will.

SILVIO (*crossing to* LELIO). Give it to me.

(LELIO *frightened, hands it to him in silence.*)

(SILVIO *reads it.*) "Say you were with me at the Carnival last night." Leave the theatre and never let me see you here again.

LELIO. Oh, all right—— (*Takes up opera hat and moves up to* C. *doors—puts on hat.*) Barnstormer!

(*Exit* LELIO C. *to the* R.)

SILVIO. Nowhere truth! Nowhere honesty! Only lies! lies! lies! (*Tears up note and throws it into grate.*)

(*The* CALL BOY *enters.*)

CALL BOY. Signore, your entrance.

SILVIO (*with a complete change of tone*). Is Count Scipione in the house?

CALL BOY. Yes, Signore, but—it's getting near——

SILVIO (*interrupting*). Find him and ask him to come here at once.

CALL BOY. Yes, Signore—but your entrance——

(SIMONETTA *enters* C. *from stage, coming to* R.C.)

Simonetta. Silvio! You will be late—your cue has gone——
Silvio (*to* Call Boy). At once! At once! (*Waves him off.*)

(*The* Call Boy *runs off.*)

Silvio (*suddenly coming back to the situation. Staring at* Simonetta—*dazed*). My cue? Oh yes, my cue.

(*He goes off* c. *to stage saying:*)

I'm coming!

(Simonetta *slowly moves to* r.)

(*Slight pause.*)

(Call Boy *ushers in* Andrea *from* l. *at* c. *into green room.* Andrea *enters, stands up* l.c. Call Boy, *boy-like, looks at* Simonetta, *then at* Andrea, *sees* Andrea *slightly frowning, and dashes off* c. *to* l.)

(Andrea *closes inner doors.*)

Simonetta. You! Why are you here?
Andrea. He sent for me. (*Moves down to* l.c.)
Simonetta. He?
Andrea. Silvio.
Simonetta. He sent for *you*—why?
Andrea. How should I know?

(*There is a subtle difference in their attitude to each other—the old thrill and electricity between them is gone, and in its place coolness, disillusion, and a kind of visible discomfort.*)

Simonetta. Surely, surely, he can have no suspicion? For God's sake, tell me that is impossible.
Andrea (*morose—almost sulky*). How can I tell? I know nothing—has anything happened?
Simonetta (*in an agony*). He came back—last night. He never went to Milan. When I got back I found him waiting.
Andrea. Oh, you told him?
Simonetta. Nothing. How could I—what could I have told him?
Andrea (*in the same manner*). The truth.
Simonetta. The truth! Do you suppose he would have believed me?
Andrea. Why not? He is trusting enough, isn't he?
Simonetta. Would you? Would any man believe such a story? If I told him what really happened?
Andrea (*with a shrug, getting* l.). Certainly—had you told *me* before we entered that gondola what was to be the outcome of your strange mood last night—*I* would not have believed it possible.
Simonetta. Oh, generous Andrea! Thank God for my woman's

instinct that saved me last night. (*Moves up to double doors, slightly opens one half, looks through and closes it.*)

Andrea. Saved you—from what?

Simonetta (*comes down* c.). From you—still more from myself.

Andrea. And what of me? There are two sides to every question, Simonetta. Do you think I suffered nothing?

Simonetta. Oh, don't deceive yourself, my friend. You didn't last night—in the heat of your disappointment I saw your feelings for me clearly as they really are. (*Turns* r.)

Andrea. You can have no sympathy for my love, then.

Simonetta (*at end of table* r.). That isn't love—it never was. Let us be honest with each other now at least—I might have known it—but I was a fool, I was mad—I didn't love you any more than you did me—I love him—my husband——

Andrea (*white and angry*). And if he knows anything, if he suspects—you will find it hard to prove that to him.

Simonetta. How can he know—or even suspect?

Andrea. Then why has he sent for *me*?

Simonetta (*moves to* c.). Andrea! You won't tell him anything—if he questions you? You wouldn't let him suspect me?

Andrea. Simonetta!—do you realize what you are saying? Whatever you may think of me—you don't believe I would do that?

(*Applause heard off.*)

Simonetta. The scene is over. He will be coming.

Andrea. He mustn't find you here with me. (*Takes off cloak and puts it on chair down* l. *by fire. Remaining* l.)

Simonetta. No, no—I'm going on the stage—it is the "Willow" scene—— (*Moves up stage* r. *of table to behind chair* l. *of it.*) Oh, for God's sake, Andrea, be careful. All my future happiness is in your hands.

Andrea (*coldly*). It will be safe there, Simonetta—as it would have been for all time if you had trusted me last night.

(*The inner doors open,* Silvio *enters hurriedly and stands one moment holding doors, looks at* Andrea *and* Simonetta; *goes to* Andrea *front of settee.* Simonetta, *unseen by* Silvio, *looks at them both and exits through baize doors on to stage.*)

Silvio. Andrea! I'm so glad you've come.

Andrea. What's the matter, Silvio? Your message was so urgent. (*Keeping* l.)

Silvio. Yes, yes. (*Moves to take off white cloak and puts it on chair* l. *of table* r.)

Andrea. It's not Donati—how is he?

Silvio. I don't know. (*Sitting* r. *corner of settee* l. *nervous, fidgeting.*) I'm thankful you've come. I've so much to say.

Andrea. Well? What is it? Important?

Silvio (*hesitating for words*). Andrea—I don't know—I can't think—how to begin—it's so difficult.

Andrea. Well then, why not wait till after the performance?

Silvio. No, no—I can't wait—(*pause*)—it's about Simonetta.

Andrea. Simonetta? She's not ill?

Silvio. No—no—not ill. No!

Andrea. I was thinking she's playing divinely to-night. Enchanting the whole house.

Silvio (*grimly*). Yes. She enchants many——

(Simonetta *commences singing "Willow" song.*)

—*too* many.

Andrea. My dear fellow—(*laughs a little nervously*)—you're not yourself—what's the matter?

Silvio (*smiling with affection on his friend*). Andrea, I know I can rely on you.

Andrea. Of course anything I can do—well?

Silvio. Simonetta!

(*A little pause.* Simonetta *is still heard singing the "Willow" song. They listen for a moment,* Silvio *then rises and closes the inner doors.* Andrea *is a little nervous at her name.*)

Andrea. It's something to do with her? (*Sits* L. *corner of settee.*)

Silvio (*comes down and rests one hand on back of settee*). Yes. She—she—— (*Struggling to keep calm.*) It's impossible! Even to you—who I know love me—to speak of it. Yet if I keep silent it will kill me. Andrea—Simonetta—has—a lover.

Andrea. Simonetta!—oh, impossible!

Silvio. I know—I tell you—I know——

Andrea (*by now very nervous*). Whom do you suspect?

Silvio. Whom should I? (*Looking at him.*)

Andrea (*nervous*). Then you *don't* know——

Silvio. I don't know *who* it is——

Andrea (*relieved—laughs*). Why, my dear fellow, this is a new mood for you. Otello indeed! And how did you arrive at your wonderful conclusion? (*Reassured and master of himself.*)

Silvio (*sits again* R. *corner of settee, close to him and talks quickly*). Andrea, you've called me a child often enough. You've said I seemed too simple, too trustful. Well, I've always thought every one honest, till the contrary was proved. So it was with her—when we first met, she seemed to me like a wild flower of our mountains—so bright, so beautiful—so full of innocence——

Andrea. I am sure she is——

Silvio. Ah! One always believes what one wishes to believe!—I thought myself the happiest man on earth—till yesterday.

Andrea. Yesterday?

Silvio (*goes on more quietly, incisively*). I had been warned—oh, Ottavia read her well—and I wouldn't listen. She was so gay, so young, such a bright, merry child. Well, last night, I had to go to Milan—I missed my train—came home and found—(*his voice trailing away into silence*)—Simonetta gone!

Andrea. Gone?——

Silvio. After a while, she came back. In such a state! Andrea—as if—she had been—Oh, fie, fie!

Andrea. But are you sure of all this?

Silvio. Quite sure—she was seen.

Andrea. Seen! But who could—who saw?

Silvio (*very quietly*). Nino.

Andrea. Nino? (*Rises and turns slightly left.*)

Silvio. Yes, Nino saw his mother leave the house with her lover.

(Andrea *sinks into seat.*)

Quite dramatic, eh? The child convicting his own mother. Oh, it's all beastly. And somewhere there's a villain smiling—(*rising and moves to* R.C., *laughing*)—someone I can't reach!

Andrea. Silvio—even if it's true——

Silvio. Even? Ha! (*Laughs sarcastically.*)

Andrea. It may not be—if it is—what will you do?

Silvio. Kill him.

Andrea. And Simonetta, would you kill her, too?

Silvio. I don't know—I don't know. (*Moves to* R. *and then back to* C.)

Andrea. You who said only yesterday—and to me—you thought Otello preposterous. That we love where we must. Don't you remember?

Silvio. Yes, I remember. But we're all fools at some time, and talk incredible nonsense. Shakespeare was right. I'm not the accommodating fellow I supposed I was. I'm jealous! Madly, wildly jealous! I always have been, but I didn't know it. I smothered it—smothered it—but all the while it smouldered and smouldered to blaze out now, and I burn—burn—burn! (*Moves up and down* C., *like a caged lion, almost snuffing up the word as though he smelt fire.*) If I could find him! (*Standing up* C.) Twist my fingers into his throat, and choke out the life she dotes upon!—— (*Goes back of table* R.C. *and round it to down* R.)

Andrea. Silvio!—you're horrible!

Silvio. Very likely. The veneer's scraped off and the primitive man shines out. Yes, that's all I am. Primitive man! Lusting for his mate—ready to kill his rival! (*Voice stops suddenly.*) If only I knew who it was! If only I knew who it was! (*Sits on arm-chair* L. *of table* R. *Every muscle strained, gazing out in front of him.*)

Andrea. Haven't you—asked her?

Silvio (*with complete change*). Oh, my dear fellow! (*Almost*

laughing at the other's simplicity.) It is you who are childish now! Don't you know how women can lie, and lie, and lie? She's by way of being with Lelio. Swore to me by all that's holy.

Andrea. Well—perhaps—it may be so.

Silvio. No. I found out that particular lie.

Andrea. Well, the whole thing may be perfectly harmless.

Silvio. Harmless! . . . If you'd seen her—ah!

Andrea (*moves to* c. *a little above* Silvio—*speaks a little hastily—his hate for* Silvio *almost getting the upper hand every now and then*). Anyhow, are *you* altogether blameless? She's young—loves pleasure. You've always treated her as a pet—as an irresponsible child—what do you expect?

Silvio. Eh?

Andrea (*pulling himself together*). What I mean is, you've always given her everything she wants. Were you right to deny her this ball?

Silvio. You seem to think *I* did wrong?

Andrea. I do.

Silvio. But, Andrea!—— (*Taken aback at* Andrea's *tone.*)

Andrea (*on* Silvio's l.). Are you so perfect—such a model husband? Do you really understand her or trouble to do so?

Silvio. My dear fellow——

Andrea (*seeing he is going too far, pulls himself up*). I'm sorry—I don't mean all that—(*to* l.c. *a little*)—but I'm thinking of her—she'd so looked forward to it—for a whole year, first you promise it then deny it—and she'd longed to go with you—(*almost with an undercurrent of jealousy*)—to—to go only with you—and she'd designed this special Bacchante dress. (*These lines with his back to* Silvio.)

(Andrea *here realizes that he has committed himself.*)

Silvio (*interrupting*). Eh? Bacchante?

Andrea. Yes.

Silvio. But—how did you know?

Andrea (*at a loss*). Why—you said so—— (*Half turning to* Silvio.)

Silvio. *I* said so?

Andrea. Yes—just now. Don't you remember?

Silvio. Oh, did I?—Well?

Andrea (*to* Silvio's l.). I say I think you're anything but blameless. I'm sure, too, there's no harm. You've frightened her. No wonder. You great big black Otello! (*Pats him on the back.*)

(Silvio *rises.*)

Come! We'll speak about this quietly to-morrow and—let me have a little talk with her first to-night. You'll regret these suspicions, I'm sure. (*Crosses down* l., Silvio *up* l.c.)

(*Great applause heard off.*)

(SIMONETTA *now enters from stage. She has masses of white flowers in her arms which she flings on to table.* CALL BOY *closes doors.*)

SIMONETTA. Ah! (*Sees* ANDREA.)

(ANDREA *tries to signal to her that all is well.*)

SILVIO. Come here, Simonetta—— (*Sees they are looking rather oddly at one another.*) Why, what's the matter between you two?

(SIMONETTA *crosses to* R. *side of table.*)

ANDREA (*laughing awkwardly*). Nothing, my dear fellow, nothing! I declare you'll be jealous of me next. (*To* SIMONETTA:) I'm so glad I got back in time for the performance to-night——

SILVIO. Ah, yes, yes. You should have been here last night—you'd have seen her at the Carnival as Bacchante—Bacchante. And I told you? (*Moves to* C.)

ANDREA (*anxiously*). Yes, I said so. (*Nodding affirmatively.*)

SILVIO. Yes. You said so. (*Looking at him searchingly. Goes up to him—looks in his eyes.*) You said so—*you* said so.

(SIMONETTA *comes down* R.)

ANDREA. Why? What's the matter? (*Tries to laugh off the situation.*)

SILVIO. What's the matter? What's the matter?

(ANDREA *shifts and instantly* SILVIO *flings his hands on to* ANDREA, *pinning him in a vice.*)

Ah, look at me! I told you nothing! I told you nothing! Do you hear?

SIMONETTA (R.). Silvio!

ANDREA (L.). I don't understand. (*Working himself free.*) What's all this play-acting?

SILVIO. I told you nothing. *You* are the man! *You! You!*

ANDREA. What do you mean? I tell you I was at Verona.

SILVIO. Prove it! Prove it! Can you?

SIMONETTA (*erect—her voice ringing out*). No!

SILVIO (*with a great cry*). Ah!

ANDREA. She's mad!

SILVIO. Simonetta!—Your dress—a surprise for me? For us all? Was it not?

SIMONETTA. Yes.

SILVIO. Then how did Andrea know?

SIMONETTA. I went with Andrea to the Carnival last night.

SILVIO (*looking at* ANDREA). Ah! The truth at last! So it was you!

ANDREA. Yes, it was I. Now you know—at last——

(*There is a tense, terrible pause—the* Stage Manager *breaks in on it, carrying sword and lamp as he enters through* R. *half of* C. *doors.*)

Stage Manager. Signore! Signora!—the last act—the stage is waiting.

Silvio. Let them wait.

Stage Manager. But, Signore! The audience is growing restless. They think there is something wrong.

Simonetta. There is nothing wrong, Grazzo. We are quite ready.

(Grazzo *goes up, holding doors.*)

(*Without a look at either,* Simonetta *goes out.*)

(*The* Stage Manager *up door waiting.*)

Andrea (*takes up his cloak*). When you want me you know where to find me—at my hotel. I shall wait there till I hear from you.

(*He goes out quietly* C. *by passage to* R.)

(Silvio, *left alone, watches him go—stands dazed—puts his hand to his forehead and gives a queer, vague kind of groan as if his brain would not grasp what has happened, then sits on settee* L.)

Stage Manager. Signore! Signore! are you ill? (*Goes to* Silvio.)

Silvio. No—no.

Stage Manager. Then come, for God's sake! They are waiting.

Silvio. I—I can't act now.

Stage Manager. But, Signore, you cannot wish to ruin the performance?

Silvio. I'm ill—say I'm ill.

Stage Manager. But only the short closing scene. I beg of you, Signore!

Silvio. I can't—I can't.

Stage Manager. The Signora is already on the stage—you'll ruin your reputation—the theatre's!——

Silvio. Oh yes! Oh yes! (*Rises.*) I'm coming. I'm coming. What scene is it? What scene is it?

Stage Manager. The last scene, you know, Signore—here are your sword and lamp! (*Hands them to him, and moves up to double doors* C.)

Silvio (*with a flash of almost mad hysteria*). Ah yes! "It is the cause, my soul. It is the cause." I'm coming—I'm coming! It's all right—ring up! ring up!

(Stage Manager *rushes off.*)

(Silvio *moves up, staggers, stops, leaning against doorway.*)

(Simonetta *is heard singing the "Willow" song.*)

"My friend—My wife—my wife? *What* wife?—I have no wife!" —No, no—(*laughs hysterically*)—that's not right, that's not the scene. "It is the cause, my soul. It is the cause——" That's it—I'm ready!——

(*Almost staggers off.*)

(*The green room remains empty.* Silvio's *voice is heard from the stage.*)

"It is the cause, my soul. It is the cause.
Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars,
It is the cause.
Yet I'll not shed her blood, nor scar that whiter skin of her's than snow.
Have you prayed to-night, Simonetta?"

(Sandro *is seen to come from the passage* c. *from* r.—Tommaso *follows and stops to listen to* Silvio *at baize doors; then as he hears that the wrong words are being spoken, he beckons* Sandro, *who has entered the green room and now joins him at baize doors and listens. At the lines* "Whiter skin than snow" Cecco *and* Dionigi *enter from* r. *passage. They are passing across when they are pulled up by hearing* Silvio *say,* "Have you prayed to-night, Simonetta?" *They stop at baize doors. Then gradually* Nella, Colia, Clelia, *and* Giuseppe *enter from* l. *and gather round the doors to see what is going wrong.*)

Simonetta. "Aye, my lord."
Silvio. "Think on thy sins!"

(*The following scene is spoken concurrently by* Simonetta *and* Silvio *off stage and other characters on stage.*)

Simonetta. "They are loves I bear to you."
Silvio. To me?—Ha, ha!—to me!—Ah, is it so?

(*The group at the door has increased—they are talking.*)

Nella. Heavens! He's lost his words!——
Silvio. "Aye, and for that thou diest!"
Colia. He's raving!
Simonetta. "Good, my lord."
Silvio. "Peace and be still."
Dionigi. What is it? What is he doing?
Cecco. Dio mio!—He's mad——
Giuseppe. What is it, Signora? Is anything wrong?
Colia. I don't know! It's dreadful—something's happening.
Clelia. Oh, I'm so frightened. Can't they do anything?
Dionigi. He's ill, he must be ill.

Nella. He's mad, can't they stop him?
Tommaso. Ring down! Ring down!
Sandro. Santa Maria! I knew something would happen!

(*All this scene between* Silvio *and* Simonetta *concurrently with people on stage.*)

Silvio. "Oh, perjured woman! He hath confessed."
Simonetta. "Alas, he is betrayed and I undone!"
Silvio. "Out wanton! Weepst thou for him to my face?"
Simonetta. "Oh, banish me, my lord, but kill me not."
Silvio. "Bacchante! Bacchante!"
Simonetta. "Kill me to-morrow, let me live to-night."
Silvio. To-morrow, to-morrow is for him!
Simonetta. Silvio! Silvio!!——
Silvio. It is too late!!

(*A cry from* Simonetta.)

Dionigi (*here cries*). God! He is strangling her! (*Rushes off by baize doors.*)

(Colia *screams and runs down* r.c.)

Grazzo (*off stage*). Ring down! Ring down! Clear the stage. Send for a doctor—send for a doctor!

(Call Boy *runs on from stage and off* r. *along passage* c.)

(*Members of the Company who have been grouped round baize doors follow* Colia *as she screams, to the positions indicated when the* Doctor *enters.*)

(*A confused hubbub, the audience shouting, the curtain being lowered, everyone talking on the stage. The* Stage Manager *calling out orders—then—*

(Dionigi *and* Stage Manager *enter carrying* Simonetta, *who is in a swoon. They place her on settee* l. Nella *and* Sandro *hold doors open for them to enter.*)

Positions when Doctor *enters:*

Simonetta, *on settee.* Dionigi, *by fireplace.* Grazzo, *by* r. *end of settee.* Clelia, *behind settee.* Giuseppe, *behind settee on* Clelia's r. Tommaso, *on* l. *of* c. *doors.* Sandro, *on* r. *of* c. *doors.* Nella, *at end of table* r. Lucio, *at top end of table* r. Cecco, *at lower right corner of table* r. Colia, *with* Cecco. Call Boy *joins* Nella *when he has shown the* Doctor *in.*)

Doctor (*off* r. *at* c.). Out of the way, please—I'm a doctor.

(*Enters* c., *giving hat and coat to* Grazzo).

(*Members of Company indicate* Simonetta.)

(*Kneeling by her, after brief examination.*) Water! Get me some water!

(Colia *exits into room* R., *returning with water.* Doctor *loosens* Simonetta's *dress. He gives her some water.* Colia *crosses* R.)

(Silvio *enters at* C. *after* Doctor *has given* Simonetta *water, and put her head back on cushion. He is exhausted, dismayed. The Company fall back from him watching him curiously.*)

Silvio (*comes down*). Is she—is she—hurt, doctor?

Doctor (*kneeling by her*). No, no—only shock—there! Give her air. Has anyone got a fan?

(Clelia *picks up newspaper from settee back and fans her.* Simonetta *gradually revives.*)

Silvio (R.C. *by chair* L. *of table* R.). Send for her maid—— (*To* Stage Manager *who sends* Sandro *off for* Maid R. *door.*)

Simonetta. Silvio. Is that Silvio?

(Silvio *makes no movement.*)

Doctor (*kneeling by her*). How do you feel now, Signora?

Simonetta. I am quite—all right—now. I'm not hurt, am I?

Doctor. No, no—only the shock—you must be quiet.

Simonetta. Please, doctor, send them all away. I want to speak to my husband.

Stage Manager. But, Signora—(*over settee back*)—would it not be better——?

Simonetta. No—Grazzo, please do as I ask—send every one away—Doctor, help him. I must speak to my husband at once—alone.

Stage Manager (*goes to* Silvio). Signore? (*Touches him on arm.*)

Silvio. You need have no fear—do as she wishes.

(Grazzo *motions the others out—then waits at door for* Doctor, *with his hat and coat.*)

Doctor (*crossing to* Silvio). Be very gentle with her.

(*Exit* C. *to* L., *taking hat and coat from* Grazzo *who follows him, closing doors.*)

Simonetta (*raising herself on settee*). Silvio——

(*He makes no reply.*)

I don't blame you. Had I been unfaithful as you believed you would have been acting within your rights—but thank Heaven, you

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did me no harm for, Silvio—I was *not* unfaithful. (*She pauses.*)

(*He does not move.*)

You don't answer. You don't laugh or cry out—as I know you might. I am going to tell you what happened last night—if you don't believe me, then you can kill me if you like—for I shall not wish to live—without your love and trust. (*She pauses.*) Still you say nothing. (*She begins quite simply.*) When you left me last night, I was mad with disappointment. For weeks and months—even for years—I have been fretting, fretting under your treatment of me. When you married me I was very young—almost a child—but because I had a child's body, you took it for granted from the first that I had only a child's mind. I grew to love you more and more every day of our married life. I admired you in your work, your high ideals, your big nature, your simple honesty. I wanted to go with you, but you wouldn't let me. You left me out of it all. Then came Andrea—I flirted with him—led him on—Oh, I own it. Last night, when you left me, I was sick with disappointment—I counted so much on the Carnival—on my dress—I had begun to think I was losing your love—even your passion—and I thought that on Carnival night—with the dress—and the music I would bring it all back again. You see I spare you nothing. Then when you left me, I was tempted—Oh, I don't blame Andrea—I suppose any other man would have done the same—and I left the house meaning to—sacrifice your honour to his passion—and I should have—had it not been that in the gondola—almost immediately we had left the house—his passion carried him away—and that saved me—I saw him as he was—as a man in whose heart is only passion—and no vestige of love—and I saw what I was doing, where I was drifting—and how I was wronging you—I fought with Andrea—yes, fought with him—literally with my hands—until I succeeded—and he brought me back—so I came back to your house as I had left it.

(*A pause.*)

If you believe me, Silvio, take me home—if you don't—leave me now.

(*A long pause.* Silvio *has stood perfectly motionless through all this. He stirs, looks at her, then goes to the doors, opens them.*)

Silvio (*calls*). Grazzo—order my gondola.

(Simonetta's *hand goes to her heart—she thinks he is leaving her. He comes down deliberately to her, kneels and picks her up in his arms and moves up* c. *She revives with a cry of relief, nestles closer to him and he carries her out as the curtain falls.*)

Curtain.

LIGHTING PLOT

ACT I

Floats.—White, ¼; amber, ¾.
Battens.—No. 1, amber, ¼; No. 5, blue full; white, ½.
Perches, P. Side.—Same as P. Side.
Stage (R.).—2 half-watts (steel blue) on backcloth.
Stage (C.).—2 half-watts (steel blue) on ground under balcony.
1 blue length.
Stage (L.).—2 half-watts (steel blue) on backcloth.
1 amber focus on tall steps to shine on curtain L.
Log fire OUT.
2-light amber lengths in backing U.S.L.
1-light amber bulb in door backings D.S.L. and D.S.R.

ACT II

SCENE I

Floats.—Amber, ¾; blue full.
Battens.—No. 1, amber, ¼; No. 5, blue full.
Perches.—*Floods:* dark amber.
Focus: Light and dark amber.
Stage.—Same as Act I, but with mediums changed to deep blue.
Focus are on steps, steel blue unfrosted.
Standard lamps lit.
Table lamp lit.
Log fire ON (half-watt rose pink in fireplace backing).
Garlands lit.
2-light amber lengths in backing U.S.L.
1 amber bulb in door backings D.S.L. and D.S.R.

ACT III

Floats.—Amber full.
Battens.—No. 1, amber, ½.
No. 5, white.
Note. No. 4 changes to blue at ANDREA'S entrance.
Perches.—*Floods:* Middle straw and salmon pink (Digby 19–21).
Focus: Middle straw and salmon pink.
Stage (R.).—Half-watt with open 19 in passage.
Stage (L.).—Ditto.
Amber bulb in door backing D.S.R.
Stage (C.).—2 half-watts behind backing facing U.S. in imaginary wings, with light amber mediums.
At Cue 1, change to dark blue (Digby 24); No. 4 batten change to blue.
At Cue 2, OUT (and No. 4 batten OUT).
Specials.—Wall brackets and light over door C. ON throughout Act.

LIGHTS CUES, ACT II

No. 1.—1*st Circuit in Chandeliers* OUT.
P. perch flood OUT.
Amber floats to ¼.
No. 2.—*Standard lamp* D.S.R. OUT.
O.P. perch flood OUT.
O.P. focus OUT.
No. 3.—D.S.R. *Standard lamp* ON.
O.P. perch flood ON.
O.P. perch focus ON.
No. 4.—2*nd Circuit in Chandelier* OUT.
Amber in floats OUT.
P. perch focus OUT.
No. 5.—1*st Circuit in Chandelier* ON.
P. perch focus ON.
Amber in floats to ¼.
No. 6.—1*st Circuit in Chandelier* OUT.
P. perch focus OUT.
Amber in floats OUT.

After Blackout

To open.—Blue floats only.
No. 1.—1*st Circuit in Chandelier* ON.
P. and O.P. focuses ON.
Floats.—Amber to ¼.
No. 1 batten; amber, ¼.

AREN'T WE ALL?

A Comedy in Three Acts

By FREDERICK LONSDALE

Characters in the order of their appearance as played at the Globe Theatre :—

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HON. WILLIE TATHAM	*Herbert Marshall.*
LADY FRINTON	*Ellis Jeffreys.*
ARTHUR WELLS	*Charles Hickman.*
MARTIN STEELE	*Patrick Gover.*
KITTY LAKE	*Cyllene Moxon.*
LORD GRENHAM	*Julian Royce.*
HON. MRS. W. TATHAM	*Marie Löhr.*
ROBERTS	*E. A. Walker.*
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ACT II. —*Room at Grenham Court.*
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